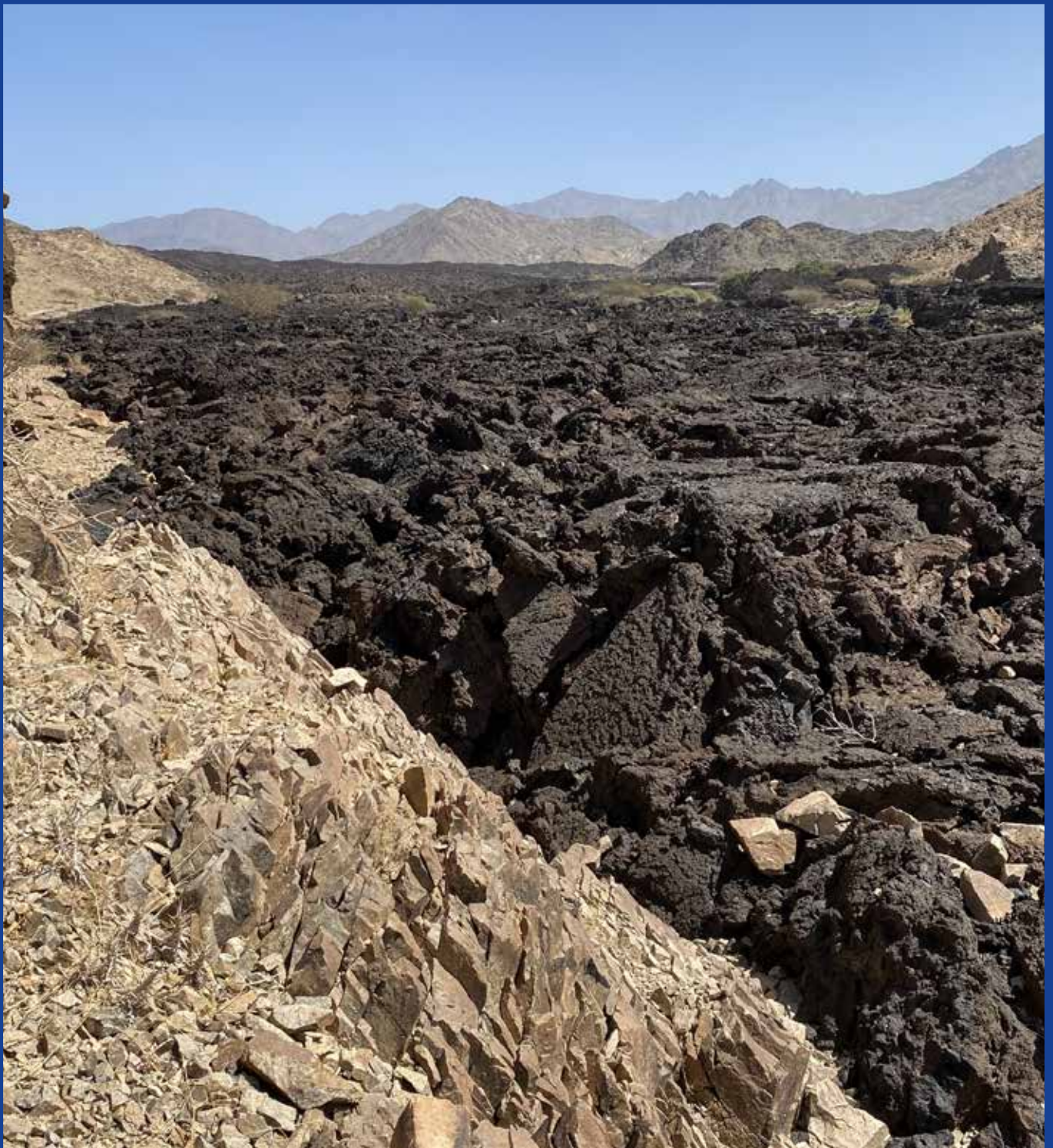


Number 26

2021 Spring Edition

# THE IASA BULLETIN



*The Latest News and Research in the Arabian Peninsula*



**IASA**  
International Association  
for the Study of Arabia  
الرابطة الدولية لدراسة الجزيرة العربية

# International Association for the Study of Arabia (IASA)

formerly the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia

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The IASA Bulletin is an e-publication for members of the IASA. It is published twice a year, in Spring and Autumn. The Bulletin depends on the good will of IASA members and correspondents to provide contributions. News, items of general interest, details of completed postgraduate research, forthcoming conferences, meetings and special events are welcome.

Please email: [bulletin@theiasa.com](mailto:bulletin@theiasa.com)

## Membership

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Cover picture: Wādī al-Ṭabaq from the report of the 2020 survey of al-Ḥawrā' 2020 page 28.

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Excavation of Doqm Trilith.  
See Oman Country News & Research page 16.  
Photograph courtesy of Ministry of Heritage & Tourism Oman,

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## WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

Welcome to this first edition of the IASA Bulletin in its new on-line form. I very much hope that you will find it interesting and informative. Carolyn Perry, its editor, and I would welcome any comments you have and suggestions for items that you would like to see included in future editions. Our aim is to produce two bulletins a year instead of one so that news and information are timelier. I would like to thank Carolyn for all her drive and energy in making this happen.

We are trying to maintain the level of IASA activity despite COVID 19 by using Zoom. Our main event, the Seminar for Arabian Studies, will be done for the first time by Zoom. The response to the call for papers has been excellent and we are anticipating some exciting virtual panels over the two weeks of the Seminar. Before that there will be a lecture on the history of Qatar by Quentin Morton on 1 April. I think it is unlikely we can arrange the Beatrice di Cardi lecture (which we want to retain as a physical lecture) until the second half of 2021. In October one of our trustees, Peter Magee, will be giving a lecture on the Neolithic in Abu

Dhabi. We will continue to look for opportunities to organise joint events: the event we organised with the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in November on recent archaeological discoveries in Saudi Arabia had a record attendance.

As noted in my January letter, we were greatly encouraged by the willingness of members and followers (as shown in the Membership Survey organised by Carolyn) to contribute funds to support the IASA Awards. We are looking at how best to organise this. We have substantial reserves and would like to use more of these for the grants, but we do not have a clear idea yet of how much of our reserve must be retained to support future Seminars which will be held in different cities each year. However, we do regard the awards as vital contributions to sustaining research into the Arabian peninsula and providing opportunities for new researchers.

**Noel Brehony**

Chair  
International Association for the Study of Arabia  
contact@theiasa.com

# IASA NEWS

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This is my first IASA Bulletin as Editor, and it has been a pleasure to receive so many contributions to the publication from around the globe. We may be focused on the Arabian Peninsula, but we are able to keep in touch with our members, followers and supporters all around the world. I am extremely grateful to all of our contributors who have taken the time to submit their research or items of interest.

This first e-version of the Bulletin does not look very different, the main change is the increased use of hyperlinks, and the convenience of being able to zoom in on images, but as members will know we will be revamping our website shortly and will review the Bulletin design in tandem. Some sections of the Bulletin that don't change between editions will move to the [IASA website](#).

If you are wondering what has happened to the Book Review section, do not worry. Book reviews will appear in the Autumn issue of the Bulletin, thanks to the hard work of Review Editor Alexandra Hirst. As you know, this is the first time we have had a Spring and Autumn edition of the Bulletin, and we had so many excellent submissions for the Spring we decided to leave something exciting for the Autumn issue which will appear in September. IASA Monographs will also be featured in the next edition.

As Noel our Chair has pointed out, changes to the Bulletin have been driven by the response to last November's member survey, but some are also consequences of the global pandemic. We are not able to report on as many 2020 conferences and exhibitions as usual, and some fieldwork activity has been suspended. This is a time of change and uncertainty for all, but I hope that you will find the activity reported on in this edition of the Bulletin to be as interesting and inspiring as I have.

Thank you,  
Carolyn Perry

## TRUSTEE NEWS

*Trustee biographies may be found on our website. Here we feature their latest news.*

### Dr Robert Bewley

I retired as the Director of the Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa project in 2020, a project that began in 2015 and now has funding until 2024. More information on the project is available at <http://eamena.ox.ac.uk>. In 2020, I was elected Chair of the Council for

British Research in the Levant (CBRL). I intend to continue working in aerial survey for archaeology wherever I can but especially Jordan and Oman (<http://www.apaame.org/>) as the director of those projects. I trained as an archaeologist (at Manchester and Cambridge Universities) and was initially employed at English Heritage as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments in 1984. I moved to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in the Air Photography Unit in 1987, and became the Head of Aerial Survey until 2003 (by then back in English Heritage). I was Head of Survey 2003-4, and then English Heritage's Regional Director for the South-West 2004-2007 and became Director of Operations for the Heritage Lottery Fund (2007-2014). My research interests are in aerial archaeology, prehistory, landscape archaeology and the Middle East and North Africa.

### Dr Noel Brehony

Our Chair Noel Brehony co-edited two books in 2020 and has another coming out this year. They are [Building a New Yemen: Recovery, Transition and the International Community](#), co-edited with Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, published by I.B.Tauris; [Global, Regional, and Local Dynamics in the Yemen Crisis](#) co-edited with Stephen W Day, published by Palgrave Macmillan and [Britain's Departure from Aden and South Arabia: Without Glory but Without Disaster](#) co-edited with Clive Jones, published by Gerlach Press.

### Prof Clive Holes

Prof Holes reports that he is in the process of compiling an annotated glossary of the Arabic dialects of the Sultanate of Oman, based on data he recorded there while he was Director of the Language Centre at Sultan Qaboos University (1985-7). The data was recorded in the field at many locations all over northern and central Oman, as far south as the Jaddat al-Harasis. This will complement his earlier work on the northern Gulf, *Dialect, Culture and Society in Eastern Arabia*, published by Brill in three volumes between 2001 and 2016. The Omani glossary will be published in the on-line Open Access Semitic Languages and Cultures Series, Cambridge University Press.

*Who is the person that sends you all those emails? Meet our Membership Secretary...*

### William Deadman

I was born in Ireland, to an English father and a Welsh mother. We moved back to the UK when I was a baby, and then to Oman when I was eight. My father taught and conducted research in the College of Agriculture in Sultan

Qaboos University, and we lived on campus. I hugely enjoyed growing up in such a beautiful country, with such friendly people, and going to a diverse international school in Muscat.

I moved back to the UK to study Archaeology at Durham University. By chance this was one of the few UK universities conducting archaeological research in eastern Arabia. For my BSc dissertation I carried out remote sensing and ground survey mapping Hafit tombs around Wadi 'Andam in Sharqiyah. I continued my research into Early Bronze Age Oman at Durham as a postgraduate, examining the nature of Umm an-Nar society for my MA, and mapping the distribution of Hafit tombs across the Batinah for my PhD. I also joined the Rustaq-Batinah Archaeological Survey project, and greatly enjoyed carrying out multi-period surveys with the RBAS team. I now work for Durham wing of the Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa project, teaching local partners in Lebanon and Iraq how to use the EAMENA Arches site database, as well as GIS and map-making skills.



## IASA LECTURES

*The IASA holds at least three online events per academic year, in addition to the Annual Beatrice de Cardi Lecture, named in honour of our late President, usually held in the Summer following the AGM.*

*If you are a likeminded organisation and would like to hold a joint event please contact us via [bulletin@theiasa.com](mailto:bulletin@theiasa.com). Members with suggestions for events are also very welcome to forward them.*

### **28 September 2020 'Arabian Renaissance', a new documentary film followed by a panel discussion (via Zoom) with filmmaker Patrick Mark of Mark Stewart Productions and archaeologists featured in the film.**

Members enjoyed an exclusive showing of 'Arabian Renaissance', a new documentary made by Patrick Mark of Mark Stewart Productions. The film shows the work of Saudi and international teams who have collaborated on a range of projects across the Kingdom in recent years. Archaeology in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has indeed entered a golden period, and the beautiful film footage of the landscape, combined with a chance to see many of the sites and hear interviews from those involved makes for a very interesting and visually exciting hour of viewing. The documentary highlights the sheer range of discoveries arising from studies of the Peninsula's climatic history to underwater excavations in the Red Sea, and the exploration of several lost cities. The filmmakers had travelled the length and breadth of the Kingdom in order to present this celebration of the renaissance of Saudi archaeology, sometimes joining teams mid-excavation. We were very lucky to have film-maker Patrick Mark with us for a panel discussion following the documentary, chaired by Derek Kennet and also including Michael Macdonald. The magic of Zoom meant that other archaeologists featured in the film could also join the discussion and answer some of the questions from the audience.

Report by Carolyn Perry

### **28 September 2020 Dr Julian Jansen van Rensburg 'Soqatra's forgotten and endangered heritage' (co-hosted with the British-Yemeni Society and the MBI al Jaber Foundation).**

The island of Soqatra has a rich and ancient history that speaks of millennia long interactions with people from throughout the ancient world. Yet, it remains better known for its unique flora and fauna than its rich cultural heritage. This situation has recently begun to change with a revival of interest by international and Soqotri individuals, whose work has begun to outline the complex and diverse cultural heritage of Soqatra, thanks to the Soqatra Cultural Heritage Project on which Julian worked. The project was funded by the DCMS and the British Council through the Cultural Protection Fund between 2017 and 2019 and run by the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in collaboration with a number of partners. The project worked with Soqotris and consulted them about the outcomes they wished to see from the project, which included the capacity to document cultural heritage, to produce resources such as a usable database, and to develop conservation and tourism so that the benefits of the project could be shared with others.

Following a brief overview of the work of previous surveys on the island, Julian showed some of the sites that had been revisited and the challenges around identification, and also a number of sites catalogued for the first time during the project. He also identified some of the threats facing the island's cultural heritage, including looting and development. In order to aid protection of sites, a Soqatra Cultural Heritage Database was built using ARCHES, to enable the locals to be able to input new sites, protect and conserve their heritage and raise awareness at home and abroad.

Julian also highlighted the importance of Soqatra's intangible cultural heritage. The Soqotri language is not officially classed as endangered, but under increasing pressure from outside influences there are fewer people able to speak it. One of the ways in which the language is preserved is through poetry, and two heritage festivals were held during the project, bringing together poets, singers, dancers and local theatre groups at which only Soqotri was spoken or sung. Soqatra is also renowned for its handicrafts, such as rugmaking, and pottery. Aloe harvesting is another traditional activity with a long record on the island. Finally, Julian noted a wide range of folk games played on the island that are enjoying something of a resurgence. These activities have now been mapped, and there is considerable overlap in areas of tangible and intangible heritage.

However, notwithstanding all these efforts to record and preserve Soqatra's heritage, the island's heritage is at threat from climate change, with buildings and sites in dire need of conservation and protection, increased development works and looting. It is hoped that sustainable tourism may play a part in raising awareness and preservation.

For more information on the project see the website <https://www.soqotraculturalheritage.org/> or follow on Twitter @SoqatraHeritage.

See Julian's talk on our [YouTube channel](#).

Report by Carolyn Perry

## **12 November 2020 Diana Darke 'Stealing from the Saracens: How Islamic Architecture Shaped Europe'**

Diana Darke is well known to IASA members for her writings on Syria. She is an Arabist and scholar who has lived in the Middle East for over thirty years. This lecture was based on her recently published and well-received book and was beautifully illustrated by a series of marvellous slides.

The fire at Notre Dame de Paris of 13 April 2019 inspired her to take up her pen to write the book. However, she had been thinking of the theme of the book for some years. She has deployed her knowledge of Arabic, architecture and even

mathematics to show that Notre Dame was "not quite as European as Europeans think". Like many of Europe's most iconic buildings it has been profoundly influenced by Islamic architectural innovations, some original and others adapted from the pre-Islamic period. In her view, the built evidence is there for all to see. No one owns architecture and everyone builds on what went before. The influence of Islam may be little understood today but was acknowledged 300 years ago, when there was a period of intense interest in Arabic studies: no less an architect than Christopher Wren commented that "The Gothic style should rightly be called the Saracen Style."

Among the features brought to Europe from the Islamic world were pointed arches, ribbed vaults, spires, and rose windows and trefoil arches as well as an innovative technique for the building of domes. These emerged over time from a blending and embellishment in Islamic lands of techniques inherited from the Byzantines and Romans (visible today unless destroyed by conflict in the Dead cities in Idlib) and then taken to Europe following the earlier path that led from Antioch to the San Vitale mosaics in Ravenna. The work of Muslim master artists and architects can be seen at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

There was much movement between Europe and the Middle East as pilgrims, abbots, monks, merchants and craftsmen were on the move and Islamic influences flowed through three principal routes. The most important was from the Levant. Crusaders, for example, found that the curved surfaces on fortresses offered better protection against missiles than the straight lines of European castles. Umayyad Spain had a profound influence. Advances in mathematics at the Abbasid court in Baghdad were brought to Cordoba and employed in building the dome and ribbed vaulting of the Mesquita. One of Diana Darke's slides showed the marks in Arabic made by masons who had worked on the Mesquita. The third route was Amalfi, where local merchants inspired the import of the pointed arch they had observed at the Ibn Tulun mosque in Cairo. Brunelleschi's dome of Florence's cathedral seems to have been based on knowledge both of Islamic construction techniques and the writings of an 11th-century century scientist in Cairo. Much later examples were in the Gothic revival of the nineteenth century. Antoni Gaudi the architect for the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona openly acknowledged his debt to Islamic influences.

Diana Darke said her entire life could be viewed as an apprenticeship for writing the book" and thus giving the lecture. She brought her years of study and observation to give an entertaining, informative and memorable lecture. Those that missed it will want to read her book or go to YouTube where her lectures can be found.

Report by Noel Brehony

### **30 November 2020 Panel Discussion on ‘Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Saudi Arabia’**

Hosted with the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies.

IASA Chair Noel Brehony introduced a panel discussion on archaeological discoveries made in Saudi Arabia over the last few years which are transforming our knowledge about some of the most ancient periods of human occupation in the Arabian peninsula. The panellists addressed the occupation history of Arabia, the regional connections between Arabia and the wider world, and the relations between people and climate. The panel comprised Dr. Jassir bin Suleiman Al-Harbash, CEO of the Heritage Commission, KSA, and formerly General Supervisor of The National Program for Handicrafts and Saudi Crafts, Dr. Abdullah M. Alsharekh, Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology, King Saud University and Advisor at the Ministry of Tourism and Michael Petraglia, Professor of Human Evolution and Prehistory in the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany. Dr. Alsharekh is the main collaborator on a number of archaeological research projects in Saudi Arabia, including Palaeodeserts (MPI), Disperse and Surface (York), the Camel site (CNRS) and is head of the Thumamah Project (KSU). Professor Petraglia has led major, long-term interdisciplinary archaeological projects in Saudi Arabia involving collaboration with environmental scientists, palaeontologists, geographers, geologists, geneticists, and biological anthropologists, among others. The panel was moderated by Dr. Derek Kennet, University of Durham.

The panel discussion may be viewed on the [KFCRIS YouTube channel](#).

### **21 January 2021 Michael Macdonald ‘Tweets from an ancient desert’**

Michael Macdonald, IASA Trustee and currently the director of several projects which record the many thousands of graffiti carved by ancient nomads in the deserts of what is now Saudi Arabia and Jordan, presented the first IASA lecture of 2021, ‘Tweets from an Ancient Desert.’

In his presentation, Michael made a very interesting comparison between the modern practice of tweeting and the graffiti of the nomads in the ancient Arabian deserts. These graffiti, like tweets, are not communications to a particular individual but are a spontaneous public expression of personal thoughts and opinions which can be read by anyone. Michael explained that, as nomadic life in the desert involved long periods of solitary idleness, graffiti was the perfect medium; the text could be as short or as long as the author wanted and, since they were carving for their own amusement, they could say whatever they liked and in whatever order their thoughts occurred to them. Michael also talked about the existence of trolls who vandalised other

people’s graffiti, often by subtly altering the letters to make it say something different.

Scores of thousands of graffiti by large numbers of individuals still exist in an area which could never have supported a very large population at any one time, thus suggesting that there must have been almost universal literacy among the nomads of the Syro Arabian deserts over a considerable period. The layout of the graffiti often seems chaotic: there are no spaces between words, no word dividers or vowels, and sometimes the text runs from right to left and left to right, or first in one direction and, on the next line, in the opposite direction. The internal structure of the graffiti, however, is almost always the same, usually starting with the author’s name and that of their father, continuing with a genealogy that is sometimes taken back to the mythical ancestor of the social group to which the author belonged, followed by a narrative and concluding with a prayer. The earliest firm date for this graffiti is the mid-6th century BC and the latest is eight centuries later and datable to AD 267. In between, there are many that mention the Nabataeans, the Jews, the Romans, the Persians and other peoples.

The tweeting nomads specifically discussed by Michael are those who carved the Safaitic graffiti, as these are particularly informative. He explained how they deal with personal relationships, loneliness and love, as well as describing the daily life of their authors, caring for their flocks of sheep and herds of goats and camels. There is a lot of sadness in this graffiti, for example, authors are sometimes grieving for people who are dead, who are captive, or who are sometimes just far away. These tweeting nomads were, however, remarkably well-informed about events in the world beyond the desert. In one inscription, for example, it seems likely that the mention of Caesar’s son refers to Germanicus, the adopted son of the emperor Tiberius, who came to Syria in AD18 and was received with great acclaim wherever he went. There are also several texts dated by Persian invasions or clashes between the Persians and the Romans.

Through these graffiti, vastly more is known about life in the desert between the last century BC and the 4th century AD than is known about life in the contemporary towns and villages. We have been bequeathed a picture of how nomadic society worked, of their social activities with each other and the outside world, of their inventions and their views of contemporary political events. But, as Michael said, above all, “these graffiti give us a direct line to the emotions of these nomads, their hopes and fears, their sadness and longing, their sense of humour, all expressed in very immediate terms – so that reading the tweets of these individuals, long dead, we empathise with them as we might with messages that just appear on our phones.”

The lecture may be viewed on [The IASA YouTube channel](#).  
Report by Marylyn Whaymand

## FORTHCOMING IASA LECTURES

1 April 2021

Lecture by Michael Quentin Morton 'Masters of the Pearl: a history of Qatar'

7.30 to 19.00 (GMT). Via Zoom

The son of an exploration geologist, Michael Quentin Morton grew up in Qatar, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in the 1950s and 1960s. After qualifying as a barrister, he spent over 30 years in a legal career before becoming a full-time author. 'Masters of the Pearl' is his ninth book about the Middle East.

The Annual Beatrice de Cardi Lecture 2021

Date and location to be confirmed.

Professor Hugh Kennedy FRSE FRAS FBA, SOAS

University of London 'Al-Baladhuri's Account of the Muslim Conquest of Arabia'

14 October 2021

Lecture by Professor Peter Magee, Director of Zayed National Museum and the Head of Archaeology with the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi 'How Abu Dhabi's archaeology is reshaping the understanding of the Global Neolithic'

Further details to be announced.

## THE SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES

The Seminar for Arabian Studies, founded in 1968, is the only international forum that meets annually for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest times to the present day or, in the case of political and social history, to the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922). Papers read at the Seminar are published in the *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* in time for the Seminar of the following year. The Proceedings therefore contain new research on Arabia and reports of new discoveries in the Peninsula in a wide range of disciplines.

The 2020 Seminar for Arabian Studies was postponed due to the pandemic; however the 54th Seminar for Arabian Studies, organized by the IASA, will take place on-line over the weekends of 2 – 4 and 9 – 11 July 2021 with the Casa Arabe, Cordoba, Spain, as virtual host. Although the Seminar will not be physically held in Spain, cultural links that connect the Iberian and Arabian peninsulas will be explored in two special sessions, one on the intellectual links (language, law, theology and culture) between Jazirat al-'Arab and Jazirat al-Andalus and the other on the comparison of cultural environmental adaptations in the Arabian and Iberian peninsulas.

The 2019 (53rd) Seminar for Arabian Studies was held in Leiden. A brief report on the Seminar featured in the last Bulletin, but Knut Bretzke has written a report on the

Special Session on the Stone Tools of Prehistoric Arabia, now published as a Supplement to PSAS 50 (see below)

On Friday 12th July, a one-day special session entitled "Stone Tools of Prehistoric Arabia" was held during the 53rd Seminar for Arabian Studies in Leiden. This session aimed at compiling an overview of spatio-temporal patterns in lithic typo-technology in Arabia. Sixteen papers were presented and attracted an audience beyond stone tool enthusiasts. Twelve of these contributions were later peer-reviewed and published in the Supplement to volume 50 of the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies.

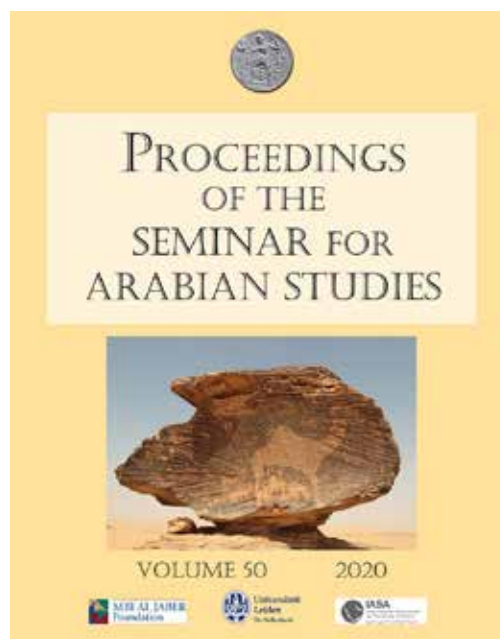
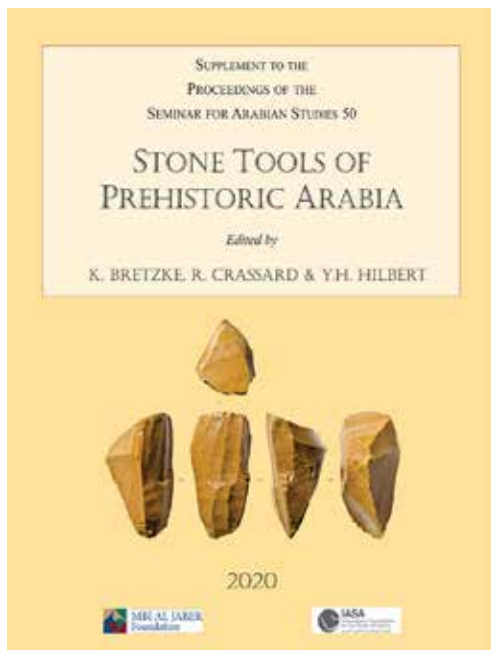
In Arabia, stone tools are abundant in many areas and can be found on many deflated surfaces often in proximity to raw material outcrops, on wadi terraces, adjacent to prehistoric lake relics or within settlements. For a long time, however, stratified archaeological records were rare and hence developing chronological frameworks was a challenge. The discoveries made by international archaeological projects conducted across Arabia in recent years have made essential contributions to our field; the archaeological investigation of human origins in the Arabian Peninsula and a better understanding of the cultural diversification throughout prehistory can be named as examples here.

This special session brought together lithic experts working on Arabian pre- and proto-history to discuss geographic and chronological patterns in continuity and breaks in lithic technology from Arabia and provide insights from experimental, traceological, technological and typological research. It also provided a platform for scientific exchange between researchers working in different periods that, at times, face the same problems.

The data, patterns and interpretations presented in the special session are an attempt to clear a path through the mist that still shrouds the tools used by our ancestors and hopefully someday will answer some of these questions. Contributions provided overviews of the Lower Palaeolithic and Middle Palaeolithic occupations in central, northern and southeastern Arabia, the early Holocene record from southwestern Oman, the Neolithic occupations of the Gulf Islands, introduced new records from northern Oman, described Bronze Age lithic traditions in UAE and Oman, and a lithic assemblage from the Iron Age of southern Oman. The special session on Stone Tools of Prehistoric Arabia and the supplement to Volume 50 of the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies add to the sources of data on human behaviour through time from the perspective of stone tools. Due to the evident taphonomic constraints that prevent the preservation of organic material, archaeologists are often faced with nothing but lithics, and even those are sometimes in pitiful states of preservation. Usually, temporal depths of surface assemblages were estimated by comparing the technologies and tool types with those from areas that have seen substantially more research. The research presented here demonstrates how lithicists are working toward the

establishment of a local frame of reference to provide data to answer their specific research objectives. We hope that further research into these subjects will follow.

**Dr. Knut Bretzke**



## IASA PUBLICATIONS

### PSAS Volume 50 2020

**Papers from the fifty-third meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held at the University of Leiden from Thursday 11th to Saturday 13th July 2019**

Ed. Daniel Eddisford. ISBN 9781789696530

The *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* is a peer-reviewed series which each year publishes papers read at the Seminar the previous year. It is the prime source for the most recent research on the Arabian Peninsula within a wide range of disciplines and for the latest discoveries in the field. PSAS 50 was edited by Daniel Eddisford, assisted by an Editorial Board formed from members of the Steering and Editorial Committee of the Seminar, and other distinguished scholars. The most recent volume presents papers from the 2019 *Seminar for Arabian Studies* which was held at the Lipsius Building Leiden.

### **Stone Tools of Prehistoric Arabia: Papers from the Special Session of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held on 21 July 2019**

Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies Volume 50 2020 edited by K. Bretzke, R. Crassard and Y.H. Hilbert.

Order from: Archaeopress [www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)  
Email: [info@archaeopress.com](mailto:info@archaeopress.com)

## IASA Monograph Series

The Monograph Series will be featured in the Autumn edition of this Bulletin.

For more information on the series, please see our website: <https://www.theiasa.com/publications/monographs/>

## IASA RESEARCH GRANTS

*In 2014 we received a very generous donation from our Patron Prof. Valeria Fiorani Piacentini. This donation enabled us to develop our research grant scheme and to increase the amount we award, enabling us to support more substantial and varied research projects. Later this year we will be launching an appeal in order to continue our grants programme at a significant level.*

Our grants are intended to support research in any academic area covered by the IASA's aims, which are to promote research relating to the Arabian Peninsula, in particular, its archaeology, art, culture, epigraphy, ethnography, geography, geology, history, languages, literature and natural history. They may be used to fund fieldwork, library or laboratory-based research or research support.

The main objective of the research must fit within the scope of the IASA's aims, and applications must be linked to clear and achievable plans for immediate publication. The number of awards made each year will depend on the strength of applications.

There are two types of research grant:

- Small Research Grants: up to £1,000 (for all categories of researchers)

- Main Research Grants: up to £4,000 (for post-doctoral research)

The deadline for applications is 15th May each year. Awards are announced by the middle of June. Applicants to the Main Research Grants should normally hold a doctorate at the time of application. Exceptions can be made for researchers with a proven track record of post-doctoral level research and publication. Applicants for Small Research Grants may be at any level of their career, though normally at least in the second year of a relevant university undergraduate degree.

The grants are available to researchers of any nationality. Individuals or groups can apply but the Principal Investigator of any project must make and be responsible for the application. If funding is being sought for a component part of a larger project, the sub-project should be free-standing with its own objectives. Generally, equipment costs should not comprise more than about 10% of the total budget. Higher proportions will be considered if the case is made in the application. Conference attendance will not normally be funded unless it can be shown that attendance will contribute in a significant way to the research and publication. Institutional overheads will not be covered. Salaries for short-term research staff are allowed but replacement teaching costs for academic staff will not normally be considered. For more details, and how to apply: [www.theiasa.com/research/grants/](http://www.theiasa.com/research/grants/)

## GRANTS AWARDED 2020

In 2020 the IASA awarded two research grants, one to Professor Adrian Parker of the Human Origins and Palaeoenvironments Research Group, Oxford Brookes University, and one to Dr Akshyeta Suryanarayan, Fyssen postdoctoral researcher, at CEPAM-UMR, CNRS, Université Nice Côte d'Azur.

Summaries of the projects funded are provided below. Reports on the results of the work will be included in future editions of the IASA Bulletin and also on the Research page of the IASA website: <https://www.theiasa.com/research/>

### **A study of late Quaternary coastal evolution and sea-level change at Jazirat Hulaylah, Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates**

Professor Adrian G. Parker, Human Origins and Palaeoenvironments Research Group, Oxford Brookes University

The highly productive marine environments that stretch along the southern margin of the Arabian Gulf have been the focus of human exploitation and settlement since the Neolithic to the present day. Despite this, the long-term evolution of the coastline in this area remains understudied in comparison to the landscapes of the desert interior. The proposed project will build on the ongoing work of the PI

and Co-I at Umm al-Quwain and Jazirat al-Hamra and investigate coastal evolution at Jazirat Hulaylah, United Arab Emirates (UAE), one of the few remaining areas of natural coastline within the northern Emirates.

### **Organic networks across the ancient Persian Gulf**

Dr Akshyeta Suryanarayan, CEPAM-UMR

This project will re-examine exchange networks in the Persian Gulf from the Neolithic till the Iron Age by creating a database of sites from a comprehensive review of existing literature; using it to model knowledge networks, land and sea connectivity routes and the relationship between sites and material culture through spatial network analysis. It will also investigate the contents of local and imported ceramic and softstone vessels from selected sites in south-eastern Arabia, Bahrain and Oman using organic residue analysis. This unique approach will be the first study combining broader-scale network analysis with molecular-level analysis on artefacts in the region.

## PAST GRANTS UPDATE

*We caught up with Jörg Matthias Determann who received a research grant from the BFA (now IASA) in 2009. Here he tells us a little about his experience working in the region since then.*

### **Teaching and Researching Arabia in Arabia**

Dr Jörg Matthias Determann



**Determann in the library on Virginia Commonwealth University's Qatar campus in 2019**

Have you been to Doha or Riyadh recently? Unfortunately, travel restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have made it hard for any scholar from outside the Gulf to visit. I especially feel for early-career researchers whose plans for fieldwork were suddenly interrupted in 2020. I consider myself all the more privileged to have been able to spend years living and working in the Arabian peninsula. In

2009, I was fortunate to receive a grant from what was then the Society for Arabian Studies for my doctoral research on historiography in Saudi Arabia. This funding enabled me to interview Saudi historians in person and access local libraries for my thesis at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. The degree of doctor of philosophy, in turn, qualified me to return to the Arabian peninsula as an assistant professor. In 2013, I began teaching at the Department of Liberal Arts & Sciences on the Qatar campus of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Being based in Arabia has been inspirational for further investigating the history of the region. I learn at least as much from my students as they from me. From my conversations with them, I gained knowledge of local dialects and countless insights into the Gulf's society and culture. This also fed into the research I was able to publish: After my first book, *Historiography in Saudi Arabia*, came a volume on *Researching Biology and Evolution in the Gulf States* in 2015. In this study, I asked how and under what constraints academics were able to engage with Charles Darwin's theory, one of the flashpoints in debates about science and religion. I found that despite much hostility toward ideas of human descent from other primates, scientists were able to discover adaptations of animals and plants to desert environments. My students readily confirmed to me public opposition to evolution. Yet, they also pointed out instances, in which their high school teachers had praised Darwin.

While I continue to reside in Qatar and retain a strong interest in the wider Arabian peninsula, I have also broadened my research horizons. My third book, published in 2018, was on *Space Science and the Arab World*. My fourth, appearing two years later, was entitled *Islam, Science Fiction and Extraterrestrial Life*. I thus became interested in the lives and work of Arab and Muslim astronomers, astronauts, writers and visual artists. My protagonists included the Saudi prince Sultan bin Salman, who went to space in 1985, and the Emirati novelist Noura Al Noman, author of *Ajwan*. Other figures I studied comprise the Egyptian geologist Farouk El-Baz, who participated in the Apollo moon landings, and the Pakistani filmmaker Saeed Rizvi. My reasons for looking beyond the Arabian peninsula were in part pragmatic and in part related to my teaching. If I ever lost my position, I thought I could more easily find a new job if I presented myself as somebody working on the wider Middle East rather than just as a specialist on Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the curriculum at Virginia Commonwealth University demanded that I teach the history of other world regions too. In my first year, I was tasked with surveying European history for undergraduates and introducing them to methods of historical research, more generally.

Even when discussing Europe, however, my students and I kept the Gulf in the back of our minds. As I turned my eyes toward the stars research-wise, I kept my feet on the ground

by following Doha's Arabic and English newspapers on a daily basis. This allowed me to engage the students with comparative questions. Can the United Arab Emirates be rightly called a "Little Sparta," as it has been nicknamed in the media? Or are the differences between the austere ancient city state and opulent Abu Dhabi too great? Is Alexander the Great a unique figure in human history? Or was the young king of Macedon similar to some contemporary princes in the Near East in his quest for power and wealth or his founding of cities? Does the category of absolute monarchy apply equally to the Habsburgs and the House of Saud? Can we see enlightened absolutism not just in the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, but also in reform-minded rulers of Arabia, for example?

What also enabled me to relate history to current politics is the extensive freedoms I have enjoyed on Virginia Commonwealth University's Qatar campus. To find materials for teaching and research, I have had largely unrestricted access to the internet and to the vast collections of VCU and the Qatar National Library. The latter includes the Qatar Digital Library, a rich repository of scanned archival records. Although none of the countries in the Gulf region are democratic, I have always felt safe to discuss their politics. Of course, sensitive topics do exist, but in my experience not many more than in other places. Some of my Sunni students once told me that they were uncomfortable presenting about the history of the Shia, as they worried about offending classmates belonging to this branch of Islam. In many European or North American lectures halls, the Sunni-Shia split would be probably less delicate. On the other hand, since the formation of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has arguably become a more charged topic on many campuses in the United States or Britain than it is in Qatar.

A sheltered workplace at an academic institution does not mean an absence of fears. A new destructive war always seems a future possibility for somebody living in Qatar, as it is a present reality for the people of Yemen or Iraq. Like my expatriate students, I hold a residency permit that is renewable, but comes with an expiration date. Nevertheless, what I may lack in terms of long-term security gives me empathy and understanding for so many others around me. And is compassion not one of the greatest qualities of any teacher or researcher?



Determann in conversation with Saudi historian Fayez al-Harbi in Riyadh in 2010

## RESEARCH GRANT REPORTS

Two recent IASA grantees, Dr Gareth W. Preston and Dr Yamandú Hilbert, give summary reports of the results of their research. Full reports may be found on the IASA website at <https://www.theiasa.com/research/>

### A chronological investigation of palaeoenvironmental change in Wadi Iddayyah, United Arab Emirates

Dr Gareth W. Preston and Ms Kira Raith, Human Origins and Palaeoenvironments Research Group, Department of Social Sciences, Oxford Brookes University,

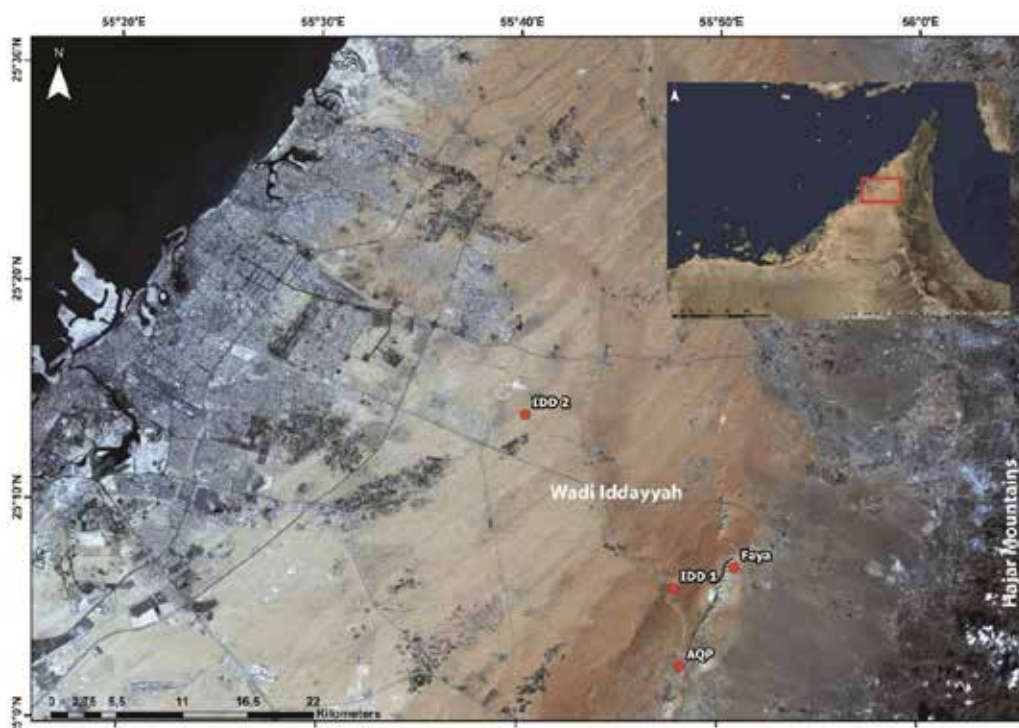
This project presents new independent, age-constrained, empirical data of Arabian climate change and landscape response from sites identified along a previously unexplored ~30 km section of Wadi Iddayyah, UAE (Figure 1). The system is the main drainage feature within the Jebel Faya anticline, which has provided the earliest evidence of anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) identified in Arabia to date (~125 ka) (Armitage et al., 2011). The wadi was surveyed by the Co-I in March 2018 during which three key sites were identified: Aqabah Pylon (AQP), Wadi Iddayyah 1 (IDD1) and Wadi Iddayyah 2 (IDD2). A total of eleven Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) samples were retrieved and dated. All ages are reported as preliminary results.

The basal unit (~0.40 m) at AQP (N25°2.569' E055°48.166') is comprised of aeolian sands which are OSL dated to

69.07±4.93 ka. The deposition of these sands thereby falls within MIS 4 (~75 – 60 ka), a period characterised by overall hyper-arid conditions (Parton et al., 2015). The basal sands are overlain by ~4.00 m of (a) fluviially-deposited silts and planar-bedded sands interspersed with (b) minor carbonate-rich sand deposits containing desiccation polygon mud curls. Four OSL ages were obtained from this unit: 38.40±1.91 ka, 36.60±1.68 ka, 35.80±2.23 ka and 30.49±1.71 ka. The sedimentological and geochemical data suggest that these deposits reflect repeated phases of channel flow which led to the reworking of aeolian sands by fluvial processes. The OSL ages from AQP fall much later in MIS 3 (~38.0 – 30.0 ka) than those reported from other fluvial records in the region (Parton et al., 2013).

The basal unit (~0.70 m) at IDD1 (N25°6.135' E 55°47.820') is comprised of aeolian sands which are OSL dated to 90.93±7.95 ka, thereby indicating deposition within MIS 5.2 (~105 – 85 ka). In contrast to the distinct humid phases recorded during MIS 5.5, 5.3 and 5.1, the lack of speleothem growth during MIS 5.2 (Burns et al., 1998) suggests a shift to more arid conditions. This is supported by evidence of aeolian activity elsewhere in Arabia (Rosenberg et al., 2011). The basal sands are overlain by a series of planar- and cross-bedded sands, the uppermost of which is dated to 33.30±3.18 ka, which are suggested to reflect the reworking of aeolian sands by late MIS 3 fluvial activity.

IDD2 (N25°14.039' E55°40.343') is a series of fluvial terraces which run along the side of a small channel which has punctuated through the dunes away from the main wadi channel. At terrace A (0.45 m) a ~0.10 m unit of silts is



**Fig. 1:** Main image: Satellite image of the Wadi Iddayyah region showing the location of the study sites, AQP, IDD1 and IDD2, and Jebel Faya (Copernicus Sentinel-2 data 2017). Inset image: Satellite image of the northern UAE showing the location of Wadi Iddayyah (Esri Basemap 2018).

underlain by aeolian sands which are OSL dated to  $15.42 \pm 0.91$  ka. At terrace B (1.10 m) the basal unit comprises planar-bedded, very fine sands which are OSL dated to  $17.46 \pm 1.05$  ka. At terrace C two silt units are separated by aeolian sands OSL dated to  $16.10 \pm 0.91$  ka. The accumulation of these distinct silt deposits implies that there was sufficient rainfall to generate low energy channel flow or standing water during the otherwise hyper-arid conditions that are thought to have prevailed throughout MIS 2 (~30.0 – 11.50 ka) (Parker, 2009).

The deposition of aeolian sands at the base of IDD1 and AQP post-date the oldest known occupation phase (assemblage C) at Jebel Faya (Armitage et al., 2011). The next dated occupation phase at the site (assemblage A) yielded ages of  $38.6 \pm 3.1$  and  $40.2 \pm 3.0$  ka and is separated from assemblages C and B by undated sterile sediments, possibly reflecting a break in occupation between MIS 5.2 and MIS 3. The MIS 3 occupation layer is separated from a deposit containing early Holocene lithics (Fasad Points) by ~0.40 m of sterile sands which yielded ages of  $38.6 \pm 3.2$  and  $34.1 \pm 2.8$  ka (Armitage et al., 2011). These sterile sands are therefore broadly contemporaneous with the deposition of fluvial sediments at AQP. The implications of these findings are the focus of the Co-Is PhD research. A detailed report of the above findings is available on the IASA website.

#### Acknowledgments

The OSL dating and laboratory analyses were kindly supported by the IASA. We thank the Department of Culture and Information of the Emirate of Sharjah and the Directorate of Antiquities, for permission to work in the region, and Knut Bretzke for his support during the fieldwork. We are grateful to Frank Preusser of the Sedimentary Geology and Quaternary Research group at the University of Freiburg and his team, including Daniela Mueller, Johannes Miodic and Alexander Fuelling, for their advice in the field and during the OSL dating work. We are grateful to Adrian Parker and Ash Parton for their constructive comments throughout the course of this project.

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### Traceological analysis of Paleolithic backed points from Dhofar: insights into South Arabian projectile technology

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Projectile technology refers to launched weapons propelled by physical strength, that may have its range and speed augmented by mechanical force using specifically developed launching systems (i.a. spear thrower, bow, cross-bow, etc), with the intent to kill or wound a target. The significance of this technology to the evolution of our species, the chrono/cultural variability, geographical distribution as well as the impact it made and still makes on archaeological interpretations are the subjects of many scientific articles and books (see Knecht, 1997 and ref. therein). The oldest uses of projectiles in South Arabia remain largely understudied.

Here, we focus on the stone insets attached to the wooden shaft that serves as the projectile. One of the reasons for focusing on these insets is their durability in comparison with most archaeological organic remains. They show great morphological variability throughout the Stone Age (Paleolithic) and reach their absolute peak in display of skill and craftsmanship during the Neolithic. This variability is a result of how points were hafted, shot, whether made from organic and inorganic material, as well as from a vast array of social factors.

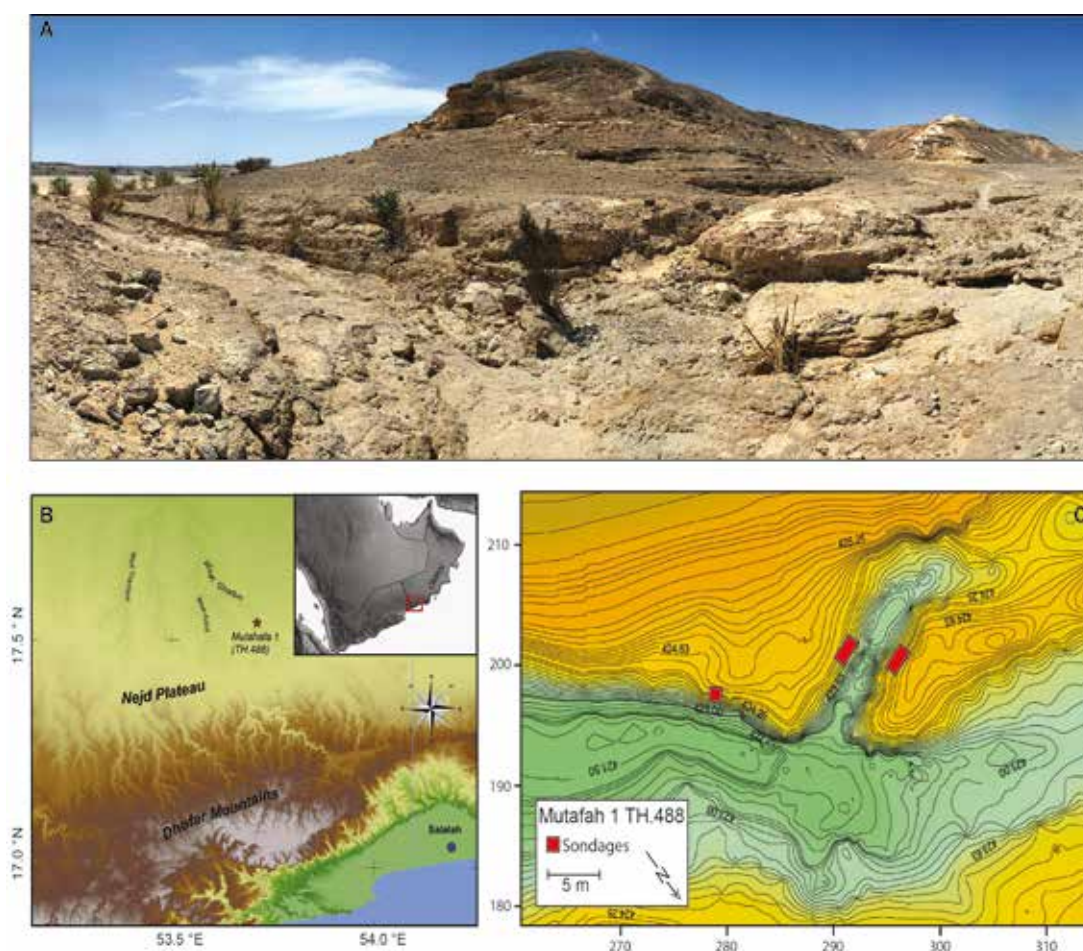


Figure 1: View of the Upper Paleolithic Mutafah 1 site (A) in Southern Oman. (B) Location map and (C) detailed topography and sondage positions at Mutafah 1 excavated in 2013 (see Rose et al., 2019).

Thanks to the generous support of the International Foundation for the Study of Arabia a traceological study (sensu Semenov, 1964) of the backed points from the Upper Palaeolithic site of Mutafah 1 dated to approx. 30,000 years ago was conducted (Figure 1). The small sample of lithics was excavated in 2013 and published in 2019 (Rose et al., 2019). The backed points and the OSL chronology of the site indicate the presence of a human population in South Arabia during a period of aridity (Hilbert et al., 2018). In total, 16 artefacts have been exported from the Sultanate thanks to

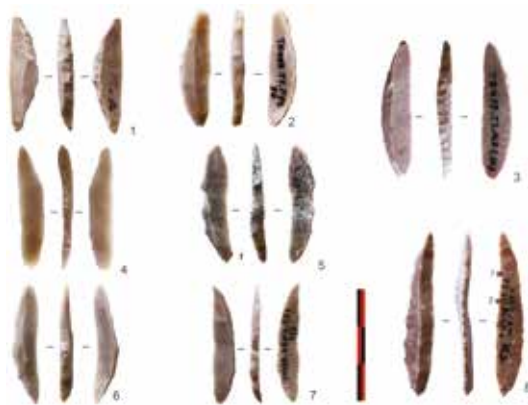


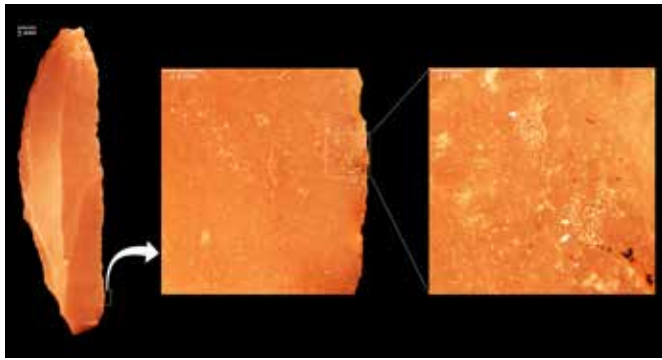
Figure 2: Characteristic backed points from Mutafah 1. The red marks on artefact #5 shows the position of the identified linear impact traces seen in fig 4 A and B. Marks on artefact #8 show where the micrographs B and D seen in figure 4 have been taken.

permits issued by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture of Oman. The analyses were conducted at the microscopy laboratories of the CSIC-IMF in Barcelona and at the University of Erlangen. By scanning the edges and surfaces of the tools under different magnifications (from x1 to x800), macro- and microscopic traces including scars, micro-polished spots, scratches, striations, residues, microscopic impact traces, are identified and compared to an experimental reference collection.

The majority of the pieces (Figure 2, left) show continuous abrupt retouch from tip to bottom creating a deliberately curved shaped back. Both the distal and proximal terminations of the artefacts show deliberate traces of shaping by fine direct percussion, forming a bi-pointed arched backed lithic inset. These arched backed bladelets share specific technological and morphological features making it germane to propose comparable operational sequences for the manufacture of these tools.

Microscopic residues were found attached to the tip of specimen #50 (Figure 3, below). The residue is characterized by a smooth and highly reflective surface, that shows a specific mud-cracked pattern. SEM-EDS analysis of the residues is currently underway.

The micro linear impact traces (Moss, 1983) on the proximal



**Figure 3: Residue on a backed point from Mutafah 1. Note the polygonal cracked pattern of the residue's surface.**

portion of specimen #104 (Figure 4) points at its use as a projectile and indicates it has been shot; further three specimens show rounding and micro-polish along their backed portion. Such traces are referred to as “G” polish, or hafting wear (Moss, 1987), and indicate that the artefacts were mounted transversally to the wooden arrow (or dart), thus making use of the proximal point to serve as a barb. Spots of undulating, moderately developed micro-polish and associated negative edge-rounding caused by abrasion was observed on specimen #111, localized along the cutting edge of the tool which may indicate an alternative use of the bi-pointed tools in the processing of a soft and abrasive organic material, possibly the cutting of hides or the preparation of food.

The traceological results of the Mutafah 1 arched backed points show these artefacts to be used in at least two different activities, hafted as projectile points and likely used in hunting as well as in transformative/productive activities, showing them to be part of a mobile toolkit. This versatility in use demonstrates how stone tools that look the same and

were manufactured with the same specific technical system may present different functional applications.

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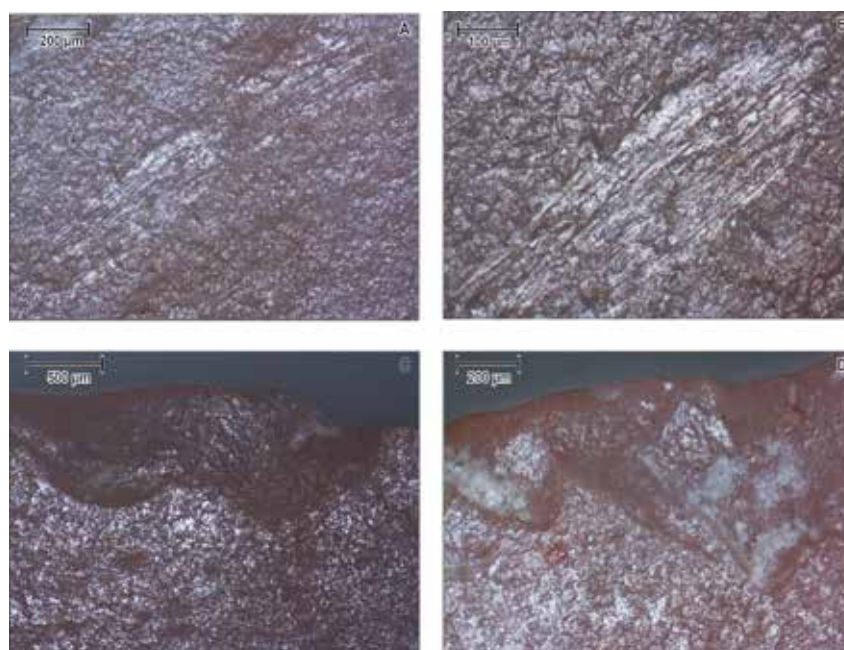
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**Figure 4: Micrographs of linear impact traces seen on the tip of artefact #104 under 100x (A) and 200x (B). C and D show the traces seen on position 1 and 2 of point #8 in fig.2. Note the edge abrasion of the micro negatives along the ridges and the associated undulating, moderately developed and dull micro polish indicating the contact with a soft but abrasive organic material.**

# NEWS AND RESEARCH

## BY COUNTRY

### OMAN

*We are very grateful to Mr Sultan Al-Bakri, DG of Archaeology of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman, and Dennys Frenez for information and updates from Oman as below. Photographs are courtesy of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.*

#### Country News

2020 has marked profound changes in the Sultanate of Oman following the nomination of H.M. Haitham bin Tariq Al Said as the new Sultan after the loss of Oman's renaissance father, Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said. The reorganisation of the country began by Sultan Haitham immediately after the mourning period also touched the Ministry of Heritage and Culture, of which he had been the Minister from 2002; this has now become the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. At the same time, the new Ministry has also absorbed the role, functions, and projects of the former Office of the Adviser to H.M. the Sultan for Cultural Affairs. H.E. Salim bin Mohammed Almahruqi, the former Undersecretary for Heritage Affairs, has been appointed as the first Minister of Heritage and Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman. H.E. Almahruqi will not only guide Oman towards its consolidation as a major worldwide tourist destination but will also continue the country's long tradition in archaeological research and heritage preservation (See Research section). Heritage and Tourism will also harmonise in a series of new initiatives concerning museums, open-air parks, visitor centres, and heritage tracks throughout the country, as well as scholarly and enthusiast-oriented publications (See Museums & Publications sections). The Sultanate's renowned attention



to understanding, preserving, and disseminating its tangible and intangible heritage also led to its nomination as a member of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee 2019-2023.

#### Research

In 2020, the Sultanate of Oman confirmed and further strengthened its support for both cultural tourism and purely research-oriented field projects. The collaboration with a great number of projects and scholars, both local and foreign, has characterised the mission of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture over the past forty years, making Oman one of the fastest forward-moving countries worldwide in terms of understanding, preservation, and promotion of its archaeological and historical heritage.

The new Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has confirmed this attitude towards the support of heritage sciences, with the country hosting more than twenty international research projects in collaboration with institutions from all over the world, Australia (La Trobe University, and the University of Sydney), the Czech Republic (Masaryk University, and the Czech Academy of Sciences), France (University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne, University of Lyon, the National Centre for Scientific Research, the National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research, the Institut des déserts et des steppes, and Eveha International), Germany (Heidelberg University, University of Tübingen, and the Goethe University Frankfurt), Italy (University of Bologna, University of Milan, University of Pisa, Sapienza University of Rome, and the University of Naples Orientale), Japan (Research Institute for Humanity and Nature), the Netherlands (Leiden University), Poland (University of Warsaw), the USA (American University of Beirut, New York University Abu Dhabi, Johns Hopkins University, Ohio State University, Temple University, and the University of Wisconsin), and the UK (Durham University, Exeter University, and Oxford University). Such institutions always collaborate with the Department of Exploration and Archaeological Studies of the Ministry and often also team up with the Departments of Archaeology and Earth Science of the Sultan Qaboos University.

In addition to archaeological excavations and studies, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism supports the conservation and restoration of specific sites and monuments based on constant monitoring by the Department of Exploration and Archaeological Studies in collaboration with the regional sections of the Ministry and the World Heritage Sites Department. In 2020, the Ministry has continued the

restoration of several important archaeological and historical buildings across the country, including the massive Bronze Age stone tower of Al-Khutm, in the UNESCO site of Bat, Al-Khutm & Al-Ayn (Ad-Dhahirah), the mid-sixteenth century Al-Owainah Mosque in Wadi Bani Khalid (Ash-Sharqiyah) and Qurnat Qaid Mosque in Samail (Ad-Dakhiliyah), as well as Bait Fateh Al-Kabir in Bawshar (Muscat) and the Medieval Fort of Nakhal (image previous page), which is considered one of the most prized historical and touristic destinations of southern Al-Batinah. Moreover, the structural conservation and ornamental restoration of the thirteenth century Bibi Maryam Mausoleum (below), a unique landmark in the history of Oman that stands at the entrance of the UNESCO site of Qalhât, has also started with technical support from Regoli & Radiciotti Ltd. (Rome). The conservation of some structures in the UNESCO sites of Sumhuram and Al-Baleed, in Dhofar, is also planned to begin early in 2021 as soon as the containment measurements implemented against COVID-19 allows safe working conditions. Important monitoring activities have also been implemented by the GIS (Geographic Information System) Department of the Ministry, which is creating a digital map of the archaeological risk to be shared with other Ministries in order to proactively plan the infra-structure development of the country in close consideration of the necessary safeguards of its tangible heritage.



## Museums

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman is presently working to establish new museums and visitor centres in different regions of the country. The Bisya & Salut Visitor Centre (Ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate) is planned to be inaugurated in spring 2021. It will present the ecological, historical, and archaeological background that led to intensive settlement of this area from the Neolithic to the Islamic period. An illustrated tour in both Arabic and English will allow the visitors to admire the thousands of artefacts on display in the visitor centre together with illustrated panels about various aspects of the archaeology of the area, and 3D models of the impressive Bronze and Iron Age sites. The Ministry has also recently signed an agreement with OQ Oil & Gas Company to start building a Visitor Centre at the site of Daba, Musandam Governorate,

from next July. It will present the impressive discovery of two large collective Iron Age tombs (LCG-1 and LCG-2), which have been uncovered over several excavation seasons carried out by the Department of Excavations and Archaeological Studies of the Ministry in collaboration with Sapienza University of Rome. Specific training activities for tourist guides have also been implemented in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Oman. According to H.E. Salim bin Mohammed Almahruqi, Minister for Heritage and Tourism, “Investment by the private sector in the heritage sector is a novel way to adopt and support projects that concern the wider society, support tourism and provide local communities with a variety of work opportunities, as well as help develop the cultural dimension.”



## New Publications

*In the Shadow of the Ancestors: The Prehistoric Foundations of the Early Arabian Civilization in Oman – Second Expanded Edition*, by Serge Cleuziou & Maurizio Tosi. Edited by Dennys Frenez and Roman Garba.

2020 © Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. (Paperback, 582 pages; Printed ISBN 9781789697889, E-Publication ISBN 9781789697896)

*The Tangible and Intangible Cultural Landscape of Wadi Bani Kharus: Investigations in the Sultanate of Oman*, by Moawiyah M. Ibrahim and Laura M. Strachan.

2020 © Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. (Paperback, 454 pages; Printed ISBN 9781789698053, E-Publication ISBN 9781789698060).

*Die Bestattungsgruben in Bat (Arabia Orientalis 1)*, by Conrad Schmidt, with contributions by Stefan Giese, Christian Hübner and Steve Zäuner

2020 © Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. (Hardback, 374 pages; German text; Printed ISBN 9781789697391, E-Publication ISBN 9781789697858).

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*Notices on activities and research in Oman from some of the teams and organisations mentioned in the report of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism appear below.*

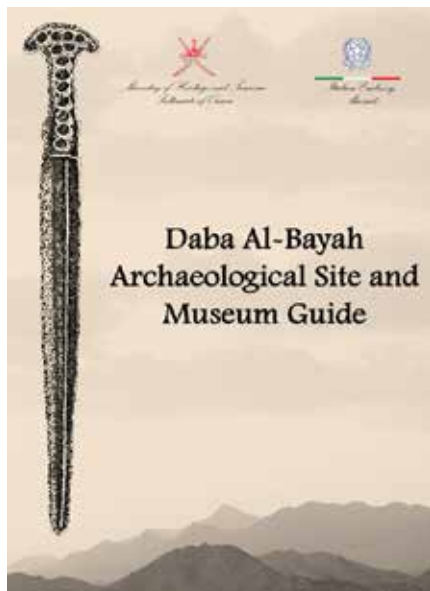
### **The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Embassy of Italy in Oman have completed an archaeology training and tourist promotion project in Musandam.**

The project for the conservation and promotion of the Daba Al Bayah archaeological site in Musandam Governorate is a joint effort of the Italian Embassy and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

An Italian archaeological team led by Dr. Francesco Genchi of La Sapienza University of Rome has been excavating the site since 2013 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. The activity, which was recently concluded, involved provided a training course for 10 Ministry of Heritage and Tourism officials for enhanced preservation of the site and to support the development of its museum as a tourism destination.

A multilingual guide of the site will allow visitors to learn about the historical importance of the settlement of Daba. A museum of the site will feature panels describing the various aspects of the archaeological complex. It also included a training for local tourist guides from Musandam who will accompany the visitors in the tours of the site. The initiative comes in the framework of the long collaboration between Italy and Oman in the archaeological sector, with more than 40 years of scientific and academic exchanges. Although the restrictions to the excavations due to the precautionary measures related to COVID-19 did not allow in-the-field activities, the cooperation between the two countries continued also this year through virtual programmes.

The project contributed to develop capacities to highlight the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Oman and to promote



sustainable tourism within the economic diversification programme.



**Daba funerary chamber. Photo: Ministry of Heritage and Tourism**

Daba is a burial complex of great importance formed by numerous large collective graves containing hundreds of individuals each, accompanied by thousands of valuable goods. Daba is located on the east coast of Musandam Peninsula and is surrounded by several Iron Age sites including both settlements and burial complex, giving the idea of a wealthy society that was living in the area. Daba is at present among the richest sites of Eastern Arabia. The metal objects recovered represent a unique assemblage for wealth and quality: a milestone for the understanding of Early Arabian Civilisation that for a decade will engage scholars from all over the world.

As a result of the importance and the good conservation of the site, the potential for tourism development in the area is extremely high.

### **The Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey**

Stephanie Döpper

The history of Central Oman during the Bronze and Iron Ages is regarded as having steadily alternated between phases of sedentism and phases of mobility, between times of upswing and decline, and between far-reaching contacts and increasing regional isolation. In this constellation, the Umm an-Nar period, with its monumental round structures, i.e. so-called towers, and the Iron Age are considered to have been periods of prosperity that replaced the less conspicuous Hafit and Wadi Suq periods as well as the Late Bronze Age. Against this background, the aim of the Al-Mudhaybi Survey is to generate an overview of the settlement history and the archaeological structures in an approximately 30 x 30 km-large area around the modern city of Al-Mudhaybi. The survey uses a combination of different methods, including remote sensing with the help of freely available satellite images, GIS-based landscape modelling, as well as targeted and systematic intensive surface survey. Funding for this project is being provided for three years by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The first field season in 2019 was based on the remote sensing of satellite images. All potential archaeological structures visible on the satellite images were marked in GIS with additional information on the possible type of structure and date. In a second step, all of the structures were ground-proven in the field. The greatest density of structures was encountered along the Wadi Andam, i.e. the main wadi course running from north to south in the eastern portion of the survey area. The Hafit period is by far the most numerous attested in the survey area, mostly due to its tombs (Figure 1). Surprisingly, the Umm an-Nar period is one of the least identified in the survey. In contrast, five large Wadi Suq period cemeteries have been documented to have a total of more than 700 tombs. These include two cemeteries near Mukhtru and one each near Al-Wafi, Al-Sudairah and Buweiten (Figure 2). No tombs could be attributed to the Iron Age by their architecture, but quite a number of them had Iron Age surface finds. Those tombs were mainly circular in shape and are probably badly preserved and reused Hafit period tombs. Non-funerary sites were not discovered in the remote sensing at all, except for the previously known Bronze Age sites Al-Khashbah and Al-Fath, the Iron Age site Lizq and several Late Islamic campsites, open-air mosques and abandoned mud-brick settlements.



**Figure 1: Hafit period tomb north-east of Al-Fath (photo: Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey).**

The systematic survey started during the second field season in 2020. It differs from traditional surveys in that the systematic survey does not limit the collection of artefacts to previously identified and anticipated sites, but rather considers places in supposedly empty areas between the localities. It is the only way to find smaller sites, such as mobile camps and other artefact scatters, and, thus, create a representative overall picture of the study area. Every four kilometres in the survey area, a straight line running from north to south is field-walked by a team of four people who are spaced two meters apart from each other to ensure visual coverage of the ground (Figure 3). This enabled documenting a large Iron Age site near Sinaw with plenty of pottery on the surface, as well as Neolithic artefacts such as arrowheads. The systematic survey is planned to continue in 2021. Additionally, small-scale excavations were carried out at the



**Figure 2: Wadi Suq period pottery sherd (top) and soft-stone bowl (bottom) from the Mukhtru and Buweiten cemeteries (photo: Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey).**

monumental structure, a so-called tower, at Al-Fath (Figure 4). Here, no Umm an-Nar pottery was found on the surface, which led to the idea that it could be a Hafit period tower. Radiocarbon dates from the lowest layers above the bedrock, however, turned out to be from the middle Islamic period around AD 1300, during which the tower had apparently been reused.



**Figure 3: Systematic pedestrian survey (photo: Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey).**

The results of the Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey have so far provided a great amount of evidence for the intensive use of the survey area during the Hafit period, but surprisingly much less during the following Umm an-Nar period, which is generally considered to be one of the most flourishing periods of Oman's history. The Wadi Suq is well documented, indicating widespread and persistent activities in the area, in contrast to what is generally assumed for this period. Remarkably, no Iron Age remains were discovered



Fig 4: Excavations at Al-Fath (photo: Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey)

during the remote sensing, but a large settlement site near Sinaw was discovered during the systematic survey. Middle Islamic structures are so far only known from the excavations at Al-Fath, while Late Islamic findings, above all pottery sherds, were plentiful throughout the entire survey area.

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Döpfer, S. – Schmidt, C. (2020), Nothing but Tombs and Towers? Results of the Al-Mudhaybi Regional Survey 2019, Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies 50, 157–169.

**Indian and local ceramics from Dhofar: a multi-analytical approach to unravel a complex cultural network.**

Silvia Lischi (University of Pisa-DHOMIAP project), Patrícia Moita (University of Évora and HERCULES laboratory), Marike E. J. J. van Aerde (University of Leiden – “Routes of Exchange, Roots of Connectivity” project), Daniele Zampierin (ARCHMAT).

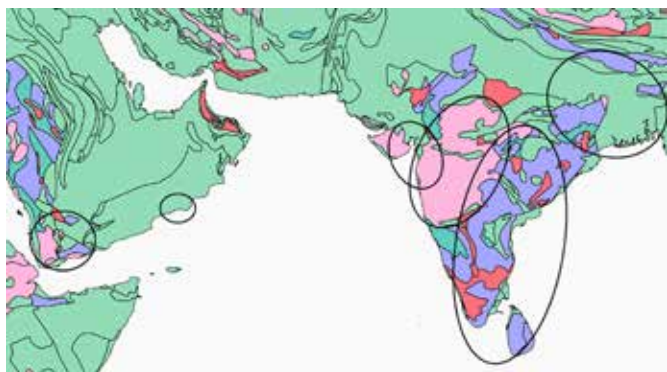
With collaboration among the Erasmus Mundus project “ARCHMAT”, the HERCULES Laboratory and the Archaeology Faculty of Leiden University it was possible to carry out a series of archaeometric analyses of pottery artefacts from the sites HASI (Inqitat) and Sumhuram, both in the area of Khor Rori, Dhofar. This was made possible through a fruitful collaboration with the project "DHOMIAP" and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (Oman).

With their strategic location concerning the production areas of frankincense, as well as the routes of exchange, HASI and Sumhuram were strongly involved in the ancient Indian Ocean trade network. In the time-span going from the 3rd-2nd century BC to the early 5th century AD, materials from a remarkable variability of regions along the coast of the Indian Ocean and beyond reached both sites.

The materials considered in the analysis were composed of a group of pottery sherds of both 'local' and 'Indian' origins, partly from Sumhuram and partly from Inqitat. The selection tried to cover the whole time-span of the two sites and to include the most characteristic types within the recovered assemblage. The aim, in fact, was to conduct a survey of the pottery composition by means of archaeometric analysis and compare the results with the archaeological and typological data in our hand. The aim was to verify whether the types identified, during archaeological survey, are also evident from a mineralogical and chemical point of view and whether the attributed areas of origin are confirmed by the fabric components.

Map of Arabian Sea including some of the most important archaeological sites connected to the Arabian Sea trade (after Lischi et al. 2020).





**General map of South Arabian and Indian geology (after [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)) with provenance of the different groups.**

The site of HAS1, ca. 8th century BC-1st/2nd century AD, was inhabited by semi-nomadic people belonging to the Coastal Culture of Dhofar. On the other hand, the city of Sumhuram, 3rd/2nd century BC-early 5th century AD, was a South Arabian colony of the Kingdom of the Hadramawt. The two sites are just a few kilometres away from each other, both along the Wadi Darbat, and they both yielded a great variety of imported materials of different cultural origins. A huge amount of pottery samples was found during the excavation activities in Sumhuram, but our attention was captured by the Indian and the local sherds. The ceramics found at the HAS1 site, certainly fewer in number but often typologically different, stimulated the need to find an alternative way to analyse them to understand whether they were expressions of the same cultural and geographical sphere or not. By means of a multi-analytical approach, which included techniques like XRD, SEM-EDS, ICP-MS and conventional petrography, it was possible to define the elemental and mineralogical composition. Furthermore, we were able to determine the presence of different groups with distinct characteristics not perceptible through only typological and macroscopic study.

The samples collected were divided into 8 groups: Shell Tempered (ST), Shale-rich Fabric (SF), Talc-rich Fabric (TF), Basalt-rich Fabric (BF), Rice Tempered (RT), Fine Fabric (FF), Medium-Large inclusions in fine Fabric (MLF) and the Shell and Sand rich Fabric (SSF).

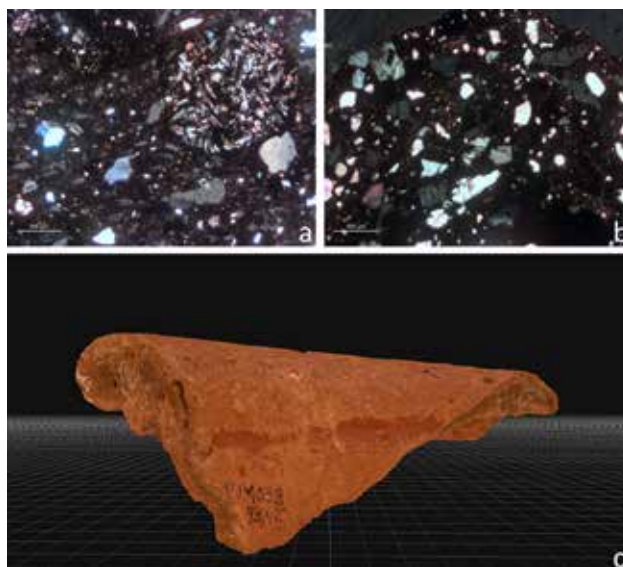
The first three groups classify the ceramics as 'local', although only for group ST is the area of production likely to be Dhofar. For groups SF and TF the production area is likely to be South-western Arabia.

The other four groups (BF, RT, FF, MLF) identified ceramics coming from four different macro-regions within India. Interestingly, the SSF group, represented by three specimens, has intermediate characteristics that do not allow identification of its provenance.

The remarkable variability in pottery composition, resulting from the geological variability of the origins, underlined three extremely important aspects. The first aspect is that the typological classification does not always give a

clear indication of the provenance. Secondly, the multi-analytical archaeometric approach has proven to be useful in recognising the different characteristics of production within the typological groupings. For this reason, sometimes, we noted a discrepancy between the typological grouping and the archaeometric grouping.

Thirdly, the results from the analysis gave indications of the geographical extension of this network. In fact, the analysis, not only underlined that the ceramics were imported from South-western Arabia, probably in relation to the Hadramawt control of Sumhuram, but also how, in both archaeological sites, materials were imported from different regions of the Indian subcontinent.



**Microphotographs (with cross polarized light-XPL) presenting the general textural features of Groups BF (a) and MLF (b). 3D reconstruction of one of the samples (c).**

This survey of the pottery composition from HAS1 and Sumhuram, has proved the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary scientific approach when tackling the studying of materials related to such a very complex reality as the Indian Ocean ancient trade network. It also underlines the importance of keeping a bottom-up approach when trying to understand extremely complex mechanisms of the past. Phenomena like globalisation, trade exchanges and movements of people are processes that do not leave linear or direct traces, but it is possible to reconstruct evidence that resulted from these processes, in the first instance, by attempting to comprehensively understand the nature and information that we can collect and analyse based on these tangible data.

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## **New investigations at the city port of al-Balīd, Sultanate of Oman**

Alexia Pavan, Roberta Giunta & Andrea D’Andrea

In 2019 a new collaboration between the Office of the Adviser to HM the Sultan, now Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and the University of Naples “L’Orientale” started at al-Balīd (fig. 1), one of the most important ports of the Western Indian Ocean between the 13th and the 17th centuries. The aim of the project is an extension of the works in the field, currently focused on the citadel (ḥuṣn al-Balīd), within the frame of a general re-consideration of the development of the city.

To achieve this target three different and parallel research lines have been set-up: an on-field investigation which was mainly focused on the analysis of the masonry, a review of the available data-archives and, finally, the study of pottery and small finds, including coins.

The first step of the joint mission was a preliminary season in situ with the aim of investigating and recording the different types of masonries attested at al-Balīd through the creation of a chrono-typological Atlas. The activities have initially been focused on the citadel (fig. 2), because it is the most complex structure so far excavated and it boasts a wide variety of different masonries with many construction

techniques having been adopted. Moreover, its extensive excavation, together with the study of the finds, could allow a better comprehension of the chronological phases in the frame of the historical and economic development of the site. Seven main types of masonry have been identified according to parameters such as: building technique, layout, manufacturing, finishing and size. Thus, the complete list of the walls of the citadel has been reviewed accordingly, associating each wall with its related type. This allowed the updating of the occurrence of the different types of masonry both in the plan (fig. 3) and in the elevation, in order to clarify the progressive enlargement of the building and the modifications which occurred during its long occupation. This approach led to the identification of four different constructional phases, featured by progressive additions, related to the different historical and economic scenarios. During the first phase there was an initial, smaller citadel, square in plan, which had the same orientation of the actual building. Four jutting towers were placed at the corners, according to the typical arrangement of the pre-gunpowder forts in Oman. The main gate was through a portal located on the western side, which was high enough to allow entrance inside the ḥuṣn while riding a horse. In the following phase the citadel gained a much more monumental appearance with two extensions located along the northern and eastern sides. The former was used for activities linked to water, as evidenced by the occurrence of a well, channels and many plastered rooms and cisterns, which suggest both the existence of productive activities and the presence of an ablution area connected with the citadel itself. The eastern area was, instead, possibly related somehow to the occurrence of stables. In this phase the gate was located on the southern side and a monumental staircase allowed access to the upper part of the construction. The layout of the

**Figure 1. View of al-Balīd and its location**  
(Satellite images: Google Earth)





Figure 2. Aerial view of the citadel (ḥuṣn al-Balīd) (Photo: A. Massa)

building underwent considerable changes after the arrival of the Turks and Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in the 16th century. “Full” circular towers were added onto three of the four corners; the northern and eastern extensions were obliterated and the citadel gained a much more solid and massive appearance, thanks to the addition of bastions along all of the four sides. The very last occupational phase is mirrored in the most external perimeter, nowadays visible. These walls often have an irregular orientation because of the presence of earlier structures below. Most of these walls were clearly built up to reinforce previous compartments or to improve static problems which occurred mainly in connection with the adjoining elements such as the towers. The types so far identified at the citadel will be employed to define and catalogue the other masonry structures at al-Balīd. Considering, in fact, the vastness of the site and the impossibility of excavating the entire complex of the buildings, such an analysis of the standing structures could lead to the establishment of a chronology range for the monuments of the settlement.

The second research line is focused on the re-examination of all the available maps with the aim to geo-reference the whole excavated or surveyed areas. A GIS application will be implemented in order to merge all the graphical information provided by the different teams who worked at the site with the aim of recording, organizing and managing the whole heterogeneous corpus of data. The archive includes materials such as topographical maps, historical pictures, epigraphic documentation and a number of written sources such as the chronicles of a number of Arab travellers and geographers, Chinese accounts and written reports by British Lieutenants and Captains belonging to the East India Company’s Service or to the Indian Navy.

The aim of this task is to clarify some open questions about the extension of the city, the natural or artificial borders of



Figure 3. Thematic map of the citadel based on the identified masonry types (Drawing: C. Passaro, after A. Massa)

the urban space delimited by the lagoon and the sea, the identification of the port area as a fully fledged harbour or a landing place for small boats, and, finally, the city’s relations with its surrounding areas.

As far as the study of small finds and pottery is concerned, the project started out with the creation of a digital archive including the almost 1500 coins discovered at the site. The corpus is actually the most consistent among the medieval corpora of coins discovered in the whole of the Western Indian Ocean and includes local, Chinese and African samples. The joint project points, moreover, to the study of the objects stored in Salalah and included in the so-called Museum Collection, a selection of pottery, small finds and coins, which gathered together the artefacts considered significant for provenience, dating and state of preservation.

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**Figure 1 (above) The citadel of al-Balid with the new recently excavated area in the foreground. (Photo: S. Al-Shahri)**

### **A noteworthy Chinese assemblage in Arabia: recent discoveries from al-Balid, Sultanate of Oman**

Chiara Visconti, Alexia Pavan

Since the resuming of the archaeological investigations at the city port of al-Balid, Sultanate of Oman, in 2016, a number of new research projects have been developed, under the aegis of the Office of the Adviser to HM the Sultan for Cultural Affairs, now Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and other foreign institutions. Particularly significant has been the study of the pottery assemblage from East Asia carried out in collaboration with the University of Naples “L’Orientale”.

The recent excavations at the citadel (ḥuṣn al-Balid, fig. 1) dramatically increased the quantity of pottery from East Asia, providing significant fresh data about the relationship between South Arabia and China during the Islamic period. The study of the assemblage from al-Balid has been carried out in the frame of a wider investigation of the imported and local pottery together with the analysis of the stratigraphy and of the architectural development of the citadel.

The data emerging from the still on-going studies reveal a numerically noticeable assemblage from China, although in most of the cases very fragmentary, which varies from 0.8% to 4% of the total amount of pottery recovered, with an average of 2.56%. The quantity appears definitely to be definitively consistent, considering that usually in Arabia and in the Gulf Area the pottery from East Asia represents

less than 1% of the assemblage. Most of the fragments come from China, and from the Jingdezhen and Longquan kiln systems in particular. Some materials were manufactured in southern kilns, such as Dehua in Fujian. Other fragments, which need further study, may come from South-East Asia.

The pottery found during the excavations of ḥuṣn al-Balid ranges from the end of the 13th century to the second half of the 18th century, attesting two main periods of relations between China and the Western Indian Ocean. The archaeological evidence emerging at al-Balid is matched by a broader picture which includes the general economic development of the site, the Chinese ceramic production for export, and the inter-Asian maritime trade system in the Indian Ocean which is actually the focus of the on-going studies by the authors.

It is not excluded that earlier material could possibly occur at the site, but the excavations were suspended due to the pandemic before reaching the earlier levels of occupation of the citadel.

The assemblage has been divided out and studied according to fabric and glaze, the main groups being: Longquan celadon (qingci) and Jingdezhen blue and white (qinghua) porcelain which occur in reverse proportion in the early phase (13th/15th centuries) and late phase (16th/18th centuries). The last occupational phase is moreover marked by the presence of porcelain decorated with overglaze



**Figure 2. Left: Celadon bowl with unglazed stacking ring on the interior bottom (US301,39); right: lid with raised decoration and iron brown spots under celadon glaze (SU301,63). (Photos: A. Pavan)**

enamels, and/or with a brown glaze of the type generally known as Batavia.

Longquan celadon mostly occur in open shapes (bowls with different diameter; plates with flattened and foliated lips) with some closed diagnostic forms such as baluster vases which are quite rare in the Chinese assemblages discovered in the extensive Western Indian Ocean which includes the Gulf and the Red Sea. A number of shapes attested for the first time at the site (fragments of ewers and lids) have been very recently discovered during the excavations of an area located north from the citadel, which belonged to an early phase of the building. This northern large annex, which includes a well, channels, and plastered basins (see fig. 1), was obliterated contemporaneously as the works aimed at fortifying the building through the addition of towers, bastions and ramparts which were started at the very end of the 15th/ beginning of the 16th century, contemporary to the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. The celadon fragments from this area of the site can be largely dated to between the 14th and 15th centuries. An example, so far unique on the al-Balīd site, is the fragment of a lid with raised decoration and iron brown spots under celadon glaze (fig. 2, right). The fragments of a blue and white bowl (fig. 3), which show a decorative pattern consisting of lotus petal-panels and foliate elements, are attributable to the same period. Indeed, the decorative scheme is typical of the blue and white porcelain production during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368).

In addition to the division into ceramic classes, based on different glazes and fabrics, the sherds unearthed at al-Balīd can be further tentatively subdivided into utilitarian wares and diplomatic gifts. To the first category belong, for example, the fragments of ‘Martaban’, i.e. jars for storing and transporting goods, found in large quantities throughout the site. To the same category can be ascribed

the numerous celadon bowls with matching stacking rings on the interior bottom (fig. 2, left). To the category of diplomatic gifts, on the other hand, can be ascribed some fragments that are remarkable for their quality and form, such as guan jars and noteworthy lotus bowls. We can assume that the two



**Figure 3. Blue and white bowl with a band of scrolling flower above upright petal lappets (SU301,62). (Photo: A. Pavan)**



**Figure 4 Chinese figurative groups possibly arrived to al-Balīd through the gift exchange system (SU73,1 and SU200,284). (Photos: A. Pavan)**

figurative groups (fig. 4), for which no significant comparisons have been found in the assemblages of other sites of the Arabian Peninsula, were also brought to al-Balīd through the gift exchange system.





Fig. 3 Excavation of the northern wall of the “fortress” (Wall F2)



Fig. 4 The “fortress” after the excavation of the northern part

soil, two projections appeared on this wall. About 1.8 m to the east, almost parallel to Wall S1, we observed the foundation of Wall S2. However, its axis slightly differs from that of Wall S1, so it could be part of a different house (Fig. 5). On the original floor level to the east of Wall S2, there is a small room measuring 2.8 m x 2.6 m adjacent to Wall S3. This wall has water drainage. Most of the floor mortar of this room remains intact, and its central part is raised for an embedded pottery oven. These facts suggest that the room had been used as a kitchen (Fig. 6). Some pieces of grinding

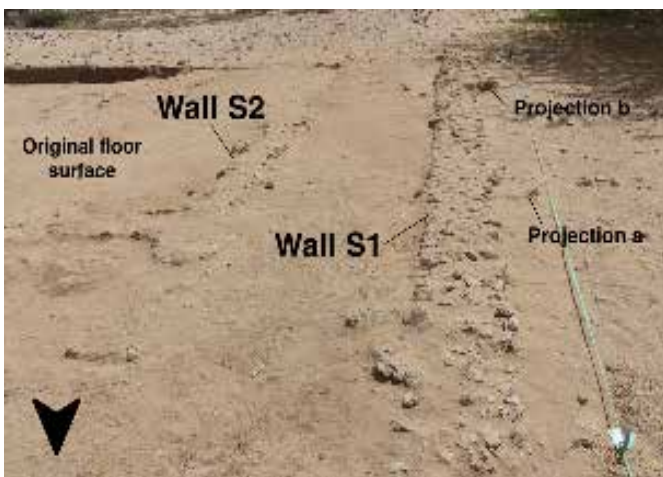


Fig. 5 Wall S1 at the southern end of House 1

stones were collected on the floor around the kitchen. To the south of Wall S2, an alkali blue-green glazed bowl, probably dating to the ninth to twelfth centuries, was found intact on the floor.

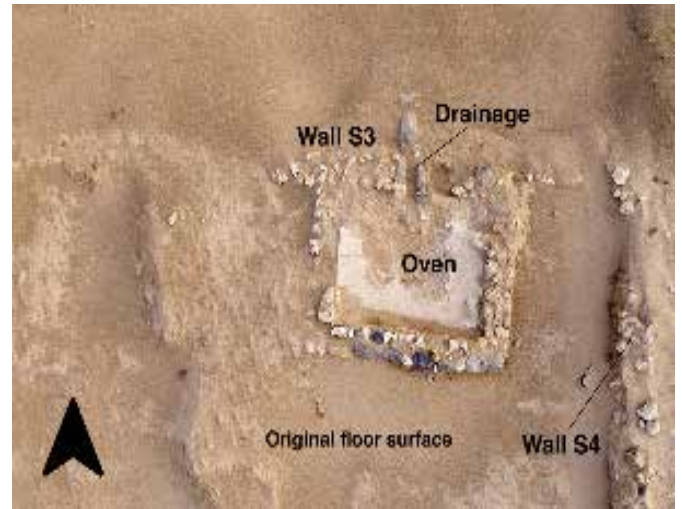


Fig. 6 A kitchen at the southern end of House 1 after excavation

The hinterland survey of this season focused mainly on the southern end of Ḥarrat Lunayyir about 65 km to the east-southeast of Umluj (Fig. 1: Area A) and the plateau which extends to the south-southeast of Umluj (Fig. 1: Area B). The survey in the former area was supported by remote sensing technology: an attempt to locate rock formations suitable for inscription through the analysis of the satellite imagery by a team from the Tokai University Research and Information Center led by Dr. Masahiro Etaya. The survey in the latter area was aided by local informants. A total of 27 sites, including three previously surveyed sites, were surveyed this season, and 46 early Islamic Arabic graffiti, 43 Ancient North Arabian (ANA) graffiti, and many petroglyphs of various periods were registered. Among them, 62 graffiti (41 Arabic and 21 ANA) were found around the locations surveyed in the results of the imagery analysis, showing the effectiveness of this method.

In the area around the southern end of Ḥarrat Lunayyir, both ANA and Arabic graffiti were found. Some of the ANA graffiti are vertically incised, showing a typical Thamūdic D formula 'n + PN (a personal name) “I am PN,” but many are short and incised in a disorderly or unskillful fashion. Remarkably, two graffiti are accompanied by depictions of an ox. The Arabic graffiti of this area can be dated to the eighth or ninth century judging from the letter shapes and the wording (Fig.7).

Meanwhile, the graffiti in the plateau south-southeast of Umluj were confined to ANA. Among these graffiti—22 inscriptions in total—all except one were found in Wādī al-Mulaylīḥ. One of them is accompanied by a drawing of camels and an ostrich (Fig. 8). The graffiti were vertically engraved and resemble Thamūdic D in terms of formulae and letters but also include some unattested letters. Many texts include a Thamūdic D formula 'n + PN, and some

include a greeting word, wdd. An isolated graffito in Murayyikh has a typical Thamūdic C formula wdd f + PN “Greeting to PN.”



**Fig.7 Arabic graffiti to the south of Ḥarrat Lunayyir (al-Ḥalaqāt)**



**Fig. 8 ANA graffiti and petroglyphs of camels and an ostrich in Wādī al-Mulaylīḥ**

Other than the areas mentioned above, it is worth mentioning the discovery of more depictions of Bactrian camels in al-Ghawt (Fig. 1: Area C & Fig. 9) and two Arabic graffiti in Wādī al-Ṭabaq (Fig. 1: Area D & Fig. 10). During our second survey in al-Ghawt, we noticed a group of Bactrian camels depicted on a rock surface adjacent to a Bactrian camel found in the 2019 season. Although they cannot be modern works, their dating is quite difficult due to the lack of graffiti.

On the other hand, Wādī al-Ṭabaq (locally pronounced “al-Ṭībq”) is a wādī running east to west at the southwestern end of Ḥarrat Lunayyir. This wādī is filled with thick black lava caused by a volcanic eruption of ca. 1000 CE. We found two Islamic invocations engraved on a remaining rock surface of the southern bank. They are undated, but judging from the letter shapes and wording, probably dated between the mid-eighth and the ninth centuries. Many other old routes connecting al-Ḥawrā and the towns around al-ʿĪṣ are presumably buried under lava.



**Fig. 9 New petroglyphs depicting Bactrian camels of al-Ghawt**



**Fig. 10 Wādī al-Ṭabaq covered with black lava**

Now al-Ḥawrā' and its hinterland have begun to reveal concrete details of past human activities. Unfortunately, the fieldwork scheduled for spring 2021 was postponed due to the pandemic, but we are hoping to resume our surveys as soon as it is resolved.

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## UAE

### New Aflāj discoveries in Hili, Al Ain

Peter Sheehan, Historic Environment Department, Abu Dhabi

Since the end of 2019, the Historic Environment Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) Abu Dhabi has been carrying out an ongoing project of archaeological monitoring during the upgrading of roads and infrastructure in the areas of Falaj Al Mazmi, Eidan Al Mahabba and Misbah Hili to the south, east and north respectively of the present Hili Oasis. This work has revealed the routes of a number of ancient aflāj preserved below the housing built in these areas from the 1970s onwards. These underground water channels brought water from the mountains to cultivated areas around and between the present oases of Hili, Jimi and Qattara.

These are some of the oldest residential neighbourhoods in Al Ain, and a major project of Al Ain City Municipality for the rehabilitation of roads was accompanied by excavations for an extensive stormwater drain network. Mitigation measures imposed by DCT included a requirement for archaeological monitoring which focused on the excavation of the deep stormwater trenches.



Hili Misbah. Excavation of a rock-cut tunnel in progress

This monitoring showed that archaeological deposits in these areas had been truncated during earlier levelling works preceding the construction of the sha'abiyat of Falaj Al Mazmi, Eidan Al Mahabba and Misbah in the 1970s and 1980s. Deeply cut features like the aflāj however largely survived this levelling and in many places are well-preserved, often to their full height. To date the existence of more than 20 separate aflāj have been identified in approximately 50 different locations around Hili at depths of up to 5 meters below the modern street level. Mapping these different locations has allowed us to plot the courses of the various channels for a total length of more than 3km and is helping to create a new map of the aflāj of Al Ain.

Several different falaj types have been distinguished, including an important group where the aflāj have been constructed by tunnelling between closely spaced access shafts or thuqāb. These were then closed and sealed with flat limestone roofing slabs laid on a ledge at the top of the vertical sides of the actual rock-cut channel and sealed with a thick layer of mortar. In most cases the aflāj had silted up and the roofing slabs had subsequently collapsed into the channel but one 25 meter section of intact open tunnel was noted and recorded by 3D scanning in Eidan Al Mahabba. The direction of these aflāj and a review of the earlier topography shown in archive air photography suggests they were probably tapping water from shallow subsurface wadi flows and supplying a large area of prehistoric and later settlement that was still preserved as late as the 1980s between Hili Oasis and the archaeological site of Rumeilah.



Closely spaced thuqāb in Falaj Al Mazmi

The Historic Environment team has carried out detailed investigation, sampling and 3D scanning or photogrammetry at these falaj locations, followed by protection and conservation measures where necessary. In a few cases where it was possible to widen the trenches locally this provided more information in plan on the sinuous direction of the falaj channels. In general monitoring of the north-south streets proved the most productive for identifying the routes of the aflāj where the latter cross them perpendicularly. Following on from the successful initial monitoring of the stormwater trenches, DCT has now

instituted a planning requirement to verify, record and preserve the presumed routes of the falaj channels during any proposed future demolition or new building in these areas. Access to some of the most significant aflāj discovered so far has also been made possible by building manholes and access shafts.

The sequence and dating of the aflāj will be addressed through study of soil and C-14 samples taken during the works. Small but consistent quantities of ceramics were also retrieved. Most of these can be placed in the Iron Age II period. Iron Age III morphological type fossils were also present, especially bowls with sharply in-curving or S-shaped rims with close parallels to the Niveau II assemblage at Rumeilah. First millennium CE common wares spanning the Late Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic periods include torpedo jars, hard-fired wares and turquoise glazed wares. These periods account for the majority of the ceramics from the Hīlī aflāj. At least two major aflāj discovered during these works can also be dated to the Early Islamic period on the basis of the finds assemblages and the use of fired bricks in their construction. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century ceramic classes were almost entirely absent, indicating that modern disturbance is either entirely absent or has been truncated away.



Hili Misbah. Brick vaulted tunnel of Early Islamic falaj.

The works at Hili have been complemented in 2020 and 2021 by the discovery of other important ancient aflāj around Qattara, Jimi & Al Ain Oases and most recently along the line of the Oman border fence. The discovery of these aflāj forming a network of channels and tunnels below the streets of the modern city related to its past settlement and

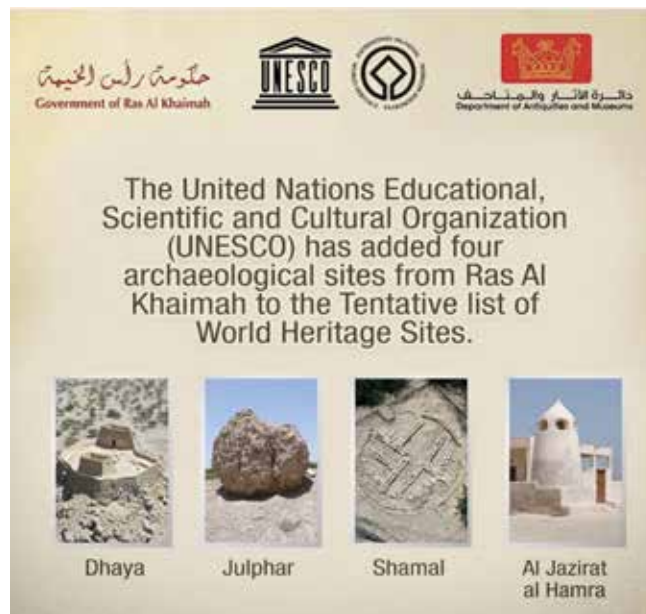
agriculture represents a major step forward in our understanding of the development of the cultural landscape forming the World Heritage Site of Al Ain.

*We are grateful to the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Ras Al-Khaimah for the following contributions, compiled by Christian Velde & Imke Möllering, Senior Researchers and Archaeologists, Department of Antiquities and Museums, Government of Ras al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates*

## UNESCO

Previous work on four places of great archaeological and historical importance was rewarded with their official selection for the ‘Unesco Tentative List’. They include:

- SHIMAL - the largest prehistoric cemetery with megalithic tombs in Southeast Arabia,
- JULFAR - Ras al-Khaimah’s famous port and trading centre during the last 1500 years,
- DHAYAH - a unique and condensed representation of all geographical, historical, and cultural landscapes on the Musandam Peninsula,
- JAZIRAT AL-HAMRA - the last surviving pearling town of the Arabian Gulf, which has remained unchanged since pre-oil times



UNESCO announcement ©Department of Antiquities and Museums, RAK

## Revitalizing the National Museum

After replacing the previous museum management, improvements could be started to revitalize the National Museum and embark on new setups of the exhibition galleries. The surprise discovery of a date press (‘madbasa’) inside the former ‘Natural History’ section lead to its conversion of display, now featuring the versatile date palm tree and its important cultural history. Further changes have

been started inside the 'Archaeology' galleries, which will be refurbished and provided with updated exhibits and informative storylines.

### Highlighting Silver Heritage

Long standing plans for a reopening of the National Museum's 'Silver Room' could be finalized, and a new, larger location selected. The planned exhibition of the museum's unique and extensive collection of traditional silver jewellery will, for the first time, display the artefacts in accordance with their geographical background and highlight their cultural significance. A forthcoming publication is planned to supplement and emphasize the jewellery project.

### Jazirat Al-Hamra

Enhanced directives in combination with a new management could be implemented for the restoration work and archaeological research in Jazirat al-Hamra, to continue and improve the understanding and conservation of this unique pearl fishing town. Work along two pathways was intensified, providing access to the heart of the settlement for future visitors. The different traditional courtyard houses along this route will provide firsthand insights into past coastal life along the Arabian Gulf.

### Public Outreach

The Department of Antiquities and Museums continued its efforts to highlight Ras al-Khaimah's heritage through press releases and videos. Wide international media coverage was received about the department's ongoing American collaboration with Prof. Lesley Gregoricka, Prof. Jaime Ullinger, and their team to study 400 kg of diagnostic bones from the human skeletal remains of two Umm an-Nar tombs dating to the 3rd mill. BC. Furthermore, a Jewish tombstone dating to the 14th - 16th century AD was prominently featured, highlighting Ras al-Khaimah's past as an important trading centre, its multicultural history, and tolerance.



Jewish tombstone ©Christian Velde



Work on human remains from Shimal © L.Gregoricka/J.Ullinger

### Falayah Park Project

The historical summer residence of the ruling Quwasim family, consisting of a fortified farmstead, tower, and mosque dating to the 18th/19th century, lies at the heart of the newly started 'Falayah Park Project'. Its specific arrangement combining traditional domestic, religious, and fortified architecture is further enhanced by its historical meaning and national importance. Future visitors will be able to explore the place where the 1820 peace treaty was signed, representing one of the historical cornerstones for the founding of the United Arab Emirates.

### Etihad Railway Survey

Preceding the building of a railway, which will be connecting all seven Emirates, an extensive survey was conducted to secure/protect Ras al-Khaimah's heritage sites from any threat and damage. Several previously unknown sites, ranging from the Palaeolithic to the Medieval Ages, could be discovered. One of the last existing copper mining sites, dating to the 10th century AD, could be excluded from the railway's initial route planning.

*Notices on activities and research in Ras al-Khaimah from some of the teams and organisations working in the Emirate appear below.*

### Bioarchaeology of Bronze Age Social Systems: Year 1

Lesley A. Gregoricka & Jaime M. Ullinger

Year 1 of a National Science Foundation-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) program, the Bioarchaeology of Bronze Age Social Systems, took place between May-July 2019. This three-year program supports the bioarchaeological training and professional development of undergraduate students. Housed at the Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama (USA), the 2019 REU consisted of eight students who – in collaboration with an interdisciplinary group of guest scientists and mentors – conducted original bioarchaeological research on two Early Bronze Age skeletal

collections from the Shimal Necropolis in the Emirate of Ras al-Khaimah.

The tombs of Unar 1 (2400-2200 BCE) and Unar 2 (2300-2100 BCE) represent the only two Umm an-Nar mortuary structures within the Shimal Necropolis. In tomb Unar 1, following decomposition, the dead subsequently became disturbed as new bodies were continually placed inside. In tomb Unar 2, after the placement of the dead within the ground story of the tomb, skeletal remains appear to have been removed, cremated, and then returned to the second story. As a result, in both tombs, the skeletal remains of hundreds of individuals became commingled, extensively fragmented, and burned to varying degrees (Blau 2001).

When the tombs were excavated nearly 30 years ago, early estimates of the minimum number of individuals, or MNI (Unar 1: 438; Unar 2: 431; Blau 2001) indicated that they held similar numbers of individuals, despite a significant difference in overall tomb size. Nevertheless, these data were collected on unwashed bones that had not yet been curated. Moreover, sex distributions are poorly documented, yet estimating this basic demographic parameter represents crucial, foundational knowledge in determining who was (and wasn't) permitted access to this space after death. Following the cleaning and ongoing curation of these two skeletal collections at the University of South Alabama beginning in 2017, assessing demographic patterns including MNI and sex – which have the potential to change our understanding of shifting demographics, mortuary practices, and social complexity in the region – became the focus of the Year 1 REU projects.



**Figure 1.** REU fellows Rachel Heil (California State University, Fullerton) and Alyssa McGrath (University of Notre Dame) review landmarks on the talus during MNI data collection

MNI was scientifically evaluated using landmark (Mack et al. 2016) and zonation (Knüsel and Outram 2004) techniques applied to two skeletal elements likely to survive commingling and cremation due to their density: the talus (McGrath et al. 2021) and the mandible (Arellano et al. 2021). MNI data was also collected using the landmark method for the petrous portion of the temporal (Ullinger et al. 2021). The landmark technique (Unar 1: 107; Unar

2: 306) produced a larger MNI for the mandible than the zonation method. The talus had similar MNI estimates using both landmark (Unar 1: 87; Unar 2: 227) and zonation (Unar 1: 88; Unar 2: 228) techniques. The left petrous portion produced the highest MNI estimates of all elements examined (Unar 1: 193; Unar 2: 410), and represents our most up-to-date estimate. Regardless of technique or skeletal element, Unar 2 had a consistently larger MNI relative to Unar 1. This was both expected given the relative size of these tombs, as Unar 2 (14.5 m diameter) is significantly larger than Unar 1 (11.5 m diameter), but also unexpected, as earlier MNI estimates indicated over 400 people interred in each tomb.



**Figure 3.** REU fellows Charlie Downey (Albion College) and Silvio Ernesto Mirabal Torres (College of Southern Nevada) take measurements and record cremation-based color changes using the distal humerus.

Sex was estimated using the mastoid process of the temporal bone (Calvin et al. 2021) as well as by taking measurements of the distal humerus (Downey et al. 2021). In order to be assessed, features had to be complete and undamaged, which severely limited the number elements that could be used in these analyses. Qualitative assessment of mastoid size produced a total of three males, 13 females, and four individuals of indeterminate sex in Unar 1, and eight males, 35 females, and seven individuals of indeterminate sex in Unar 2. The gracile nature of many mastoid processes indicated that either more women were interred in the tombs or that the skulls of females were more likely to survive fragmentation. Conversely, quantitative measurements of the humerus estimated the presence of more males (Unar 1: 8; Unar 2: 40) than females (Unar 1: 6; Unar 2: 8), suggesting that Umm an-Nar peoples of both sexes may have had relatively robust postcranial skeletons. While both females and males were clearly permitted access to tomb spaces throughout the latter part of the third millennium BCE, further research is warranted on other skeletal elements to clarify broader patterns of sexual dimorphism at the site.

Unfortunately, Year 2 (Summer 2020) of the REU was cancelled due to COVID-19. The REU will resume in Summer 2021, when students will continue paleodemographic investigations including adult and subadult age estimation using both traditional qualitative and quantitative measures as well as newer techniques including transition analysis. These methods will be used to develop

age profiles in order to compare interment practices between the tombs over time. Bone bioerosion in perinates will also be evaluated using micro-CT scans to assess whether stillborn infants were permitted access to interment within the tomb.

For more information about the REU, please visit our <https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/syansw/anthropology/reu/> and [student blog](#). You can also watch Digital Stories summarizing the research of our REU student fellows (in English and with Arabic subtitles) on our [YouTube Channel](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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## A newly discovered Iron Age II settlement in the Shimal Plain

Michel de Vreeze, Samatar Botan, Tibor Paluch

It was in the late sixties that Beatrice de Cardi first explored the archaeology of the Shimal area in her survey of the Trucial States (de Cardi & Doe 1971). Her contributions to our knowledge of both the prehistoric and historic archaeology of the region still hold much value up to this day. It is thus a great honour to continue working at the area of Shimal, Ras al-Khaimah, with the support of a Beatrice de Cardi award provided by the Society of Antiquaries of London, chasing up some of the clues Beatrice herself already started untying. In late 2019, a first season kindly sponsored by a de Cardi award and with full support from the Department of Antiquities and Museums, Ras al-Khaimah, set out to further study the prehistoric settlement history of the Shimal area, and focused on previously unexplored low-lying mounds within the Shimal area.

The Shimal plain is a large alluvial fan stretching from the northern Hajjar mountains to the coast above the Islamic port of Julfar. The present-day landscape is marked by gravel plains with acacia and shrubs roamed by goats, and extensive palm gardens within the alluvial fan away from the foot of the Hajjar mountain range to the east. It is an area that has always been rich in water provided by the run-off wadis from the mountains. Shimal is particularly rich in archaeological remains and foremost known for the hundreds of monumental Wadi Suq (2000-1600BC) tombs made of the large limestone boulders extracted from the nearby mountains, besides two earlier monumental Umm an-Nar tombs (Velde in prep.). A relatively small settlement of Wadi Suq-Late Bronze Age date is also known (Shimal-Middle), excavated by a German team in the 1980's (Vogt and Vogt 1987). Although potentially a prime area for settlement throughout prehistory, Iron Age occupation was less well attested, leaving a large gap in our understanding. Although some evidence of Iron Age shell middens was explored in the plain (a bulldozed shell midden was examined by Beatrice de Cardi), and some of the Wadi Suq period tombs were known to have been re-used in the Iron Age too, a more sizeable Iron Age settlement was so far conspicuous in absence. The 'Understanding Prehistoric Settlement Dynamics Project' was launched to further understand the shifts in prehistoric settlement patterns, and to test the possible presence of further Iron Age remains in the area.

The first season proved already highly successful in identifying an Iron Age (ca. 1100-600BC) settlement within an area of derelict palm-gardens. Surface scatters of Iron Age pottery, together with protruding stone architecture, pointed to possible evidence of buildings (Fig 1). Two main trenches excavated on one of the higher mounds with this evidence established multiple buildings with so far at least two distinct phases of habitation. An earlier phase was predominantly made of mudbrick architecture, and a later

phase features stone built architecture, partially of rather unique nature.



**Fig. 1: the ongoing excavations at Shimal with the Hajjar mountains in the background**

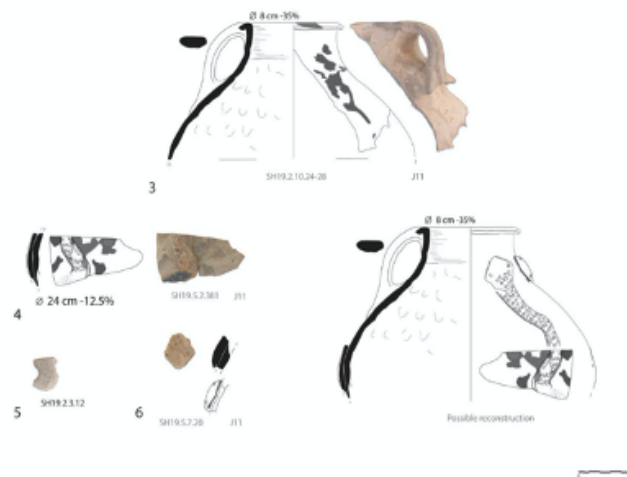
Although no complete ground plans have been excavated, the settlement seems to have included a thick exterior wall and a set of multi-room buildings. Thick layers of shell, predominantly *Terebralia palustris*—a giant mangrove whelk—and oyster shells (but awaiting specialist analysis), fit with the settlement being located close to ancient mangroves, providing an important economic staple for the people in the Shimal plain. This follows the same pattern as the nearby Bronze Age settlement. What kind of agricultural regime was practised is an important question that merits further study, partly by studying the botanical material from the site in future seasons.



**Fig. 2: Partially burnt room of the lower phase with in situ smashed storage jars.**

At the newly discovered site, at least one pillar support in the later phase of the main rectangular building suggests that we might have an example of a pillared hall (though not of the size of that of contemporary Muweilah or Rumeilah). The lower phase of habitation showed another welcome surprise. In trench 2, a heavily burnt floor was found, with burnt wood (at least partially of the local Ghaf tree) suggesting a wooden

roof to have collapsed. Within this burnt collapse were several large Iron Age storage jars, smashed but still in situ on the floor (Fig. 2). Flat stones probably functioned as supports for these large vessels. Next to these large jars, the fragment of an intriguing vessel was found. A handled jug with a distinct greenish-brown splash painted decoration was found on the floor (Fig. 3). Further fragments of the vessel, also found in later disturbed contexts, suggest that the vessel featured a snake applique decoration and a distinct trifold handle. The splash decoration is indeed very reminiscent of a certain snake's skin and might have imitated this serpentine-like pattern intentionally. This jug was certainly a special vessel and one can imagine its striking look while serving liquids to the thirsty in the many bowls found on site. In the next room, a hammer stone was found with copper prills still lodged inside. Evidence of tiny copper prills in different locations of the buildings suggest copper working was a part of the daily activities here. All this evidence starts to point to the buildings so far discovered at Shimal having a function akin to columned halls and cultic buildings at Masafi, Muweilah, and Adam and other places. C14 analysis of samples from the destruction layer suggest that at least part of the early phase building was destroyed shortly before 800BC. Whether this fits the more general upheaval in the region will be actively researched within future seasons. For now, the renewed Shimal excavations have added important Iron Age settlement evidence within the Shimal area of Ras al-Khaimah. These will help us further understand how people in southeast Arabia sustained their livelihoods in this area throughout prehistory, dealing with the many challenges of climate and cultural change.



**Fig. 3: Jug with splash decoration and snake applique, showing a possible reconstruction**

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*Sharjah Museums Authority has very kindly provided the reports below on some of its activity over the past year.*

### **A year of Covid 19 – Sharjah Museums Authority**

Like many places around the world, Sharjah Museums Authority closed its museums in March 2020 as we all sheltered from exposure to the virus. While some exhibitions were postponed, two had just opened; it became an opportunity for many of us to work from home with newly created secure access to our servers.

For the Collections Management team this also meant we had secure access to our collection management system. As a team, we were able to concentrate on auditing and editing entries and adding images, conservation records, and loan and exhibition histories. It gave us an opportunity to tidy up, archive files, and review our internal electronic filing. We have used Zoom and Webex to meet and deliver collection care webinars.

Once 50% work place attendance began in July and the museums gradually reopened during July and August the staff of Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization resumed work on the addition of some 120 objects to the permanent displays that had been gifted courtesy of Sharjah Museums Authority's patron, His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah.

This required a review of the four art gallery displays and resulted in both a complete change and redisplay of a case's contents or the alteration of a case's contents for 42 out of 83 cases. The team learned to draw to scale plan and elevation views of displays, and many began to use the collections



**Mountmaking and installation**

management system extensively to check object identification numbers, download images and audit collections. With case layouts redesigned, labels were reviewed and rewritten, display case furniture and number blocks quantified and purchased. Many objects also needed new mounts to optimise their presentation and for support. Since 2016 there had been a programme of upgrading display case furniture in these galleries and with the addition of the new objects this has enabled us to complete this process.

From September onwards and working around home schooling, the collections team conserved and prepared some of the ceramics for the art galleries redisplay. This provided a training opportunity to take down old repairs, reassemble and gap-fill. Prior to this, we had hurriedly prepared 70 metal and ceramic objects at the end of 2019 for temporary display but some of the ceramics needed more work (below).



With fewer visitors and no international temporary exhibitions, the process of adding these new collections to the permanent galleries has allowed curatorial and collections care and particularly museum technicians to take advantage of the time to learn new skills, to practise and to become more proficient in these and others previously acquired, especially welding and making metal mounts. Whilst this behind the scenes work was going on the Education, Marketing and IT teams worked rapidly to increase the virtual museum experience. At Sharjah Art Museum, this included a virtual tour of the temporary photographic exhibition of Ada Mulnehat's work with on-line catalogue and tours of the Barjeel and Sharjah Art Museum's permanent collections of contemporary Arab art. The Education team quickly made their family workshops available on line providing a list of the required materials on registration for each workshop. There have been virtual lectures and talks offered for their more academic programmes. For the family workshops, initial uptake was

good, but decreased once on-line schooling started in September. However the academic programmes have seen a 100% increase in attendance. The Education staff were determined to succeed and their use of Zoom improved as their confidence grew.

Although we are still working with reduced numbers of staff in the work place at any one time, home schooling and 'at risk' staff sheltering at home, it has been a busy and productive year in a different way to that envisioned at the end of 2019. There is also the realisation that we need to maintain a greater on-line and virtual presence and review the design and activation of gallery interactives currently out of order for hygiene reasons.

And, yes, some staff and their family members have been ill; fortunately most are fine but sadly there have been a few deaths. We are fortunate that the vaccination programme is well underway and we are looking forward to hosting some international exhibitions this year.

### **Sharjah Museums Authority - Digital Programmes**

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and in response to the country's laws and regulations to ensure public safety and wellbeing, Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) was keen to continue reaching and engaging its audience locally and globally through delivering its high standard educational programmes each designed for specific community groups. The programmes delivered via Zoom served as a safe and convenient alternative to physically attended programmes and acted as a bridge between museums and the public during a time of uncertainty.

The Authority's series of digital programmes kicked off on July 6th, 2020 with 300 participants from various countries attending "Humans and Mars", a lecture that outlined scientific interests in Mars and highlighted the Hope Probe and UAE's astronomical ambitions. Other lectures covered topics that included "Emirati Women and the Family", in which the role and experience of Emirati women both past and present were highlighted; "Social Customs and Traditions during the Covid-19 Epidemic", "Islamic Architecture", "Art Techniques", "Life in Stone Age Sharjah" as well as programmes highlighting the history and techniques of Arabic calligraphy.

Besides lectures and talks, SMA's digital offerings also included virtual tours of museum galleries and collections, as well as engaging workshops to stimulate curiosity and creativity for families and individuals with disabilities. Several local and international specialists and professionals were guest speakers including renowned calligraphers, historians, car collectors, university professors, artists and museum staff.

The programmes aim to reach community members of various interests and ages including families, students, researchers and people with disabilities. During the course of 6 months, SMA delivered 46 digital programs with a total attendance of 1,836 from across the globe. Although all Sharjah Museums are now open, a new bundle of exciting digital programmes continues to be offered every month.

### **Sharjah Museums Authority's digital exhibition in celebration of the International Museum Day - Museums for Equality: Diversity in Times of Adversity, 18 May 2020 - 31 July 2020**

Every year since 1977, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) chooses a theme to celebrate International Museums Day (IMD). Because of the Covid-19 global health crisis, museums around the world celebrated this day under the theme "Museums for Equality: Diversity and Inclusion". Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) took the opportunity to share moments of creativity and solidarity via its digital platforms, by inviting young artists, musicians and poets to share their artistic creations and be part of a unique digital exhibition.

Artists from around the world submitted diverse artworks that included photography, digital design, paintings and poetry. The 17 artworks selected to be part of this specially curated digital exhibition came from both male and female artists from different countries including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and India. These original and inspiring works responding to the 2020 IMD's theme demonstrated the global need for creativity during the international health crisis.

"Stay. At. Home", "A World Crisis", "Family", "All for One, One for All", and "Hang in There", were some of the titles participants chose for their submissions. Although different in style, the works had one thing in common Covid-19 and its influence. Many of the works highlighted the family bond, connectivity and entertainment during quarantine, with depictions of family members spending quarantine time with pets, puzzles, painting, or gadgets. In an artwork titled "United", the artist depicted humanity in its diverse cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions, coming together to form one existence, one presence, one face.

Another artwork entitled "My Children's Dreams 1" was a way the artist could share her children's view and reaction to Covid, as it depicts her son in an encounter with the virus without a face mask, reflecting how fearless he is of the invisible enemy. Other artworks were dedicated to frontline workers in appreciation of the risks they have taken and sacrifices they have made towards ensuring the safety and wellbeing of others.

### **Umm al-Quwain archaeological heritage: Research, conservation and valorisation**

Rania Hussein Kannouma (Archaeology Department, Umm al-Quwain) with Michele Degli Esposti and Federico Borgi (Italian Archaeological Mission in Umm al-Quwain)

In late 2019, the appointment of H.H. Sheikh Majid bin Saud bin Rashid al Mualla as the Chairman of the Tourism and Archaeology Department of Umm al-Quwain (TAD) boosted a season of renewed efforts in the study, protection, and promotion of the archaeological and traditional heritage of the Umm al-Quwain Emirate, entailing the start of new projects and the revitalization of ongoing ones.

A new research programme focused on the al-Abraq area was started in cooperation with the Italian Archaeological Mission in UAQ (IAMUQ – Abraq Research Project) directed by Michele Degli Esposti and Federico Borgi. Its core project is the excavation at the multi-period site of Tell Abraq, the eastern part of which lies in Umm al-Quwain's territory (Degli Esposti and Borgi, 2020). There, two fieldwork seasons (2019, 2020) highlighted significant archaeological contexts, with a specific focus on the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age transition and on the Late Pre-Islamic period. The latter, in particular, is now evidenced by the unexpected discovery of a massive building, the investigation of which promises to change the picture of this period in the area (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: General view of Tell Abraq at the end of the 2020 season, looking southwest, with the IAMUQ trenches in the foreground (©IAMUQ/F. Borgi).**

Stratigraphic excavations at Tell Abraq are conceived as part of an integrated approach comprising the immediate consolidation of the discovered ancient architecture, with the final aim of providing the public with a new site to visit in the near future.

The Abraq Research Project also includes the investigation of two long chamber graves located some 300m east of Tell Abraq, at a site labelled Abraq 2 (Figure 2). A team from the TAD has carried out two short excavation seasons in 2019 and early 2020 and works will be completed over the next years. The team of the IAMUQ is supporting the works specifically dealing with mapping, drawing and study of the

archaeological materials, and analysis of the building materials (in collaboration with the University of Milan). Over the last few years, the TAD has excavated several graves at the Late Pre-Islamic site of Ed-Dur. Limited areas within the site were also tested. The study of the grave architecture and the grave goods is ongoing and will hopefully lead to an exhaustive publication. Currently, the main efforts at Ed-Dur are concerned with conservation and restoration, under the supervision of Mr Simon Warrack.



**Figure 2: Orthorectified zenithal view of the partially excavated graves at the Abraq 2 site (©IAMUQ/F. Borgi).**

While the so-called Temple of Shamash (Haerinck, 2011) was restored in 2015, the restoration of the fort excavated inside the site by an Iraqi-UAE team in the 1970s was completed in November 2020 (Figure 3), and works are continuing in the necropolis of Area N (Haerinck, 2001). All these works are aimed at making Ed-Dur, “The lost city of Arabia”, the principal archaeological park of Umm al-Quwain, hopefully opening soon.

In the Umm al-Quwain lagoon, a relevant development project is going to interest the island of Siniyah. For this reason, the TAD first, and the IAMUQ in late 2020, carried out the intensive archaeological survey of the island, identifying several sites of potential archaeological interest, all dated to the Late Islamic period as far as one can tell from survey collection. Against the background provided by this research, the development project has been examined and test excavations were started in early 2021 by the TAD at sites endangered by the works.

An additional survey in the lagoon (Akab Island, al-Harmalah Island) was carried out by the IAMUQ team. This confirmed the presence of substantial Late Pre-Islamic and less so Islamic remains on the Akab island, which will become the next main focus of archaeological research after the completion of the ongoing excavation programmes. It is worth pointing out here that in the Umm al-Quwain Municipality's maps Akab Island does not correspond with the one rightly made famous by the discovery of the “dugong mound” (Méry et al., 2009), but to the one to its south. In



Figure 3: Aerial view of the Ed Dur fort after the restoration work completed in November 2019 (©IAMUQ/F. Borgi).

relation to the archaeological literature published so far, the toponyms of Ghallah Island and Akab Island should be inverted (Figure 4).

Another main goal of the TAD-UAQ is to complete the archaeological map of the Emirate. Results of the uttermost relevance were already achieved by the French Archaeological Mission, directed by Sophie Méry, for what concerns the coastal area of Umm al-Quwain, where several Neolithic sites were also excavated (most recently Méry et al., 2019; Degli Esposti et al., 2020). In October 2020, the southern area of the Emirate, around Falaj al-Mualla, was surveyed by a team of the IAMUQ. The remaining, mostly desert strip of land will be the target of a new survey during the second semester of 2021.

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Figure 4: Correct toponyms for the islands of the Umm al-Quwain lagoon ((©IAMUQ/F. Borgi).



# YEMEN

## Report from Seiyun Museum (The Kathiri Sultan's Palace)

Saeed Ba Yashoot

The Kathiri Sultan's palace - the most popular tourist attraction in Yemen, even ahead of the walled mud city of Shibam, also in Hadhramaut - was given World Heritage Site status by UNESCO in 1985.

The most imposing structure in the town of Seiyun, this majestic white building is probably one of the largest mud-brick structures in existence. The actual date of building is unknown but it was the site of a Kathiri Sultanate government building as early as 1411. This famous landmark is an important surviving example of the distinctive style of Hadhrami mud architecture.



In 1857 the Sultan Ghalib Bin Mohsin Al Kathiri constructed the mud-brick palace in its present form – five storeys and 25 metres high, and it was completed by his son, second Sultan of the modern Kathiri dynasty, Al Mansour Bin Ghalib. Since 1983, the palace has housed the Seiyun Museum (the Kathiri Sultan's Palace) and is itself one of the most important elements of the museum. The museum is ranked third in the museums' classification in Yemen.

Seiyun Museum was founded in 1974, when the government purchased a collection of popular heritage (ethnographic items) from a local collector, the late Mr Ali Al Mashhour. This collection formed the basis of the museum, which opened first in a building called Bir Elmejraf (Elmejraf Well). The move to the new headquarters (the Kathiri Sultan's palace) coincided with the establishment of the archaeology section of the museum in 1984. That section housed the results from various scientific expeditions that worked in Hadhramaut, such as a French expedition in 1979, a Yemeni archaeological team that carried out work in 1981 and the Soviet–Yemeni joint interdisciplinary expedition, which, commencing in 1983, conducted excavations at the Rayboon site until 2004.

The Museum consists of three sections, each representing a particular cultural and historic period, covering ancient archaeology, folk heritage objects and an exhibition of black-and-white photographs. The museum's collection tells the stories of cultures from the dawn of human history, more than 1.3 million years ago. Objects range from the earliest tools made by humans to much more recent items.

### Ancient Archaeology Section

This includes artifacts, displayed in chronological order from the oldest period until the Islamic era.

Items in the Prehistory Artifacts Gallery, covering the Stone and Bronze Ages, come mainly from archaeological excavations and surveys of different sites in Wadi Hadhramaut and its tributaries, like Al Qezza cave in Wadi Dou'an and areas in the Jol (southern and northern plateau) and desert. These artifacts, including stone tools and anthropomorphic stone stelae, date from as much as 1.3 million years ago (Palaeolithic) stretching to around 2,000 BC.

The Pre-Islamic Artifacts Gallery (The Ages of Yemeni Civilisations) includes items from excavations by national and foreign expeditions along the length of the Wadi Hadramaut and its tributaries. Artifacts are shown from some of the most important sites, including Rayboon, Jujah, Al Ghuraf, Mekaynon, Meshga and Suna.

The Islamic Antiquities Gallery. This section contains various masterpieces found in different early and medieval Islamic archaeological and historical sites. They include many examples of wooden objects with arabesque designs, like doors, columns and their capitals, and pulpits (Minbars), the oldest of which dates back to the 7th Century AH (after Hijra) / 13th Century AD. There are also tombstones with Arabic inscriptions, the oldest being from the 4th Century AH / 10th Century AD, as well as coins and glass and ceramic items.

### Popular Heritage Section

This section contains historical objects from the first half of the 20th Century, showing aspects of life in Wadi Hadramaut. The objects relate to economic activity as well as other elements, while a number of prestige items imported from abroad by members of the Hadrami diaspora in Africa and South-East Asia are also included. The section includes the following galleries:

Galleries of Marriage, Birth, Clothing and Jewellery.

Gallery of Handicrafts and Tools

Gallery of Ancient Cooking Implements

Gallery of Coffee and Tea Customs

Gallery of Traditional Medicines

Gallery of Folk Agriculture

Gallery of Carpentry and Building Tools

Gallery of Weapons.



Historic Photographs exhibition

This exhibit includes black and white photographs which provide documentation of life and the environment, in Hadhramaut in particular and, more generally, the rest of Yemen. Often beautifully shot, they include pictures of monuments, other buildings, handicrafts and people. Most were taken between 1930 and 1960 by foreign travellers, like the Dutchman Daniel Van der Meulen, Britain's Freya Stark, and Hans Helfritz, German-born but later a Chilean citizen. As a result of the civil war in Yemen, the Seiyun Museum was closed, re-opening on February 2019. It was then closed again, due to precautionary measures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, but re-opened in September 2020.

The Museum receives both Yemeni and foreign visitors, the latter mainly being those associated with international organisations working in the country. It also receives groups from schools and universities. Visitors usually number between 800-100 per month, although approximately 11,500 visited during 2020.

## Two 'cities' on Yemen's Tihamah Plain

Michael Fradley

Remote-sensing survey by the Arcadia-funded Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA: [www.eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk](http://www.eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk)) project at the University of Oxford has identified two large settlement sites on Yemen's Tihamah Plain, first presented at a talk to the British-Yemeni Society (Fradley and Bewley 2019). As the conflict in Yemen is ongoing and the Red Sea city of Hudaydah remains a key focus of this engagement, the two sites will be discussed without reference to their specific location, and will just be discussed regionally as the Hays site and the Wadi Mawr site.

At a general level the Tihamah Plain is not a landscape that can be effectively surveyed using optical remote-sensing techniques, and even documented archaeological sites can be difficult to identify. The two sites discussed are therefore quite distinct in terms of their physical size and their visibility on satellite imagery.



Figure 1: The Hays site.

The Hays site (Figure 1) consists of a large area enclosed by a rampart bank or wall defining its north and eastern sides and measuring approximately 800m in length, with a combination of curves and angular turns in the perimeter. The western side of the site is defined by a wadi channel, and the south by rising rocky slopes, encompassing an area of around 22 hectares. There are several breaks in the rampart, but on the basis of the available imagery it is not possible to indicate any potential original entrances. In the interior there is visible evidence of c.50+ rectangular structures, in some cases with attached walled enclosures. These are largely concentrated on the south-western side of the area within the ramparts, with evidence of recent agricultural fields in the north-eastern section. The layout of structures within the interior appears relatively irregular, with a number of building alignments in evidence. The highest concentration of structures is in the south-eastern corner, with a small number of additional structures terraced in to the slopes to the south. A single solitary structure was also recorded at the peak of the hill some 700m to the south of the settlement area.

The Wadi Mawr site (Figure 2) is also enclosed by a morphological comparable running for c.950m around all but its western side, again with curves and angular turns in the perimeter, and broken at one stage of its northern circuit by a wadi channel. It is possible that the rampart was longer, but has been cut away along its west and part of its southern circuit by shifts in wadi channels. The interior visible today measures approximately 22 hectares, again near-identical to that of the Hays site. A key visible difference in this rampart is the existence of a possible entrance on the southern side of the perimeter, marked by two possible rectangular towers set on the interior side of the rampart. An outer rampart also runs out to the south of this area, creating a trapezoid 'forecourt', enclosing an area of c.0.5 hectares. All but the north-eastern quarter of the interior is covered by modern agricultural fields, with evidence of only four rectangular structures or enclosures. A small rise of ground in the north-eastern quarter is crested by a range of rectangular



Figure 2. The Wadi Mawr site.

structures and enclosures, possibly part of a larger complex. Immediately to the north-west of this complex of buildings is an Islamic cemetery. Sharp wall lines visible on a number of structures across the interior of the Wadi Mawr site suggest that some of the structures may have been rebuilt or maintained recently, or additional buildings added for agricultural or religious use.

Further investigation in the environs of the two sites has recorded a range of additional features in the foothills along the eastern edge of Tihamah. This includes a number of terraced settlement sites, although these cannot be morphologically linked to either of the ‘city’ sites. Particularly distinct are a number of features found only in the hinterland of the Wadi Mawr sites. Consisting of parallel walls made up of elongated mounds or cairns, creating what appears on a satellite image as a series of adjoining rectangular chambers. There is some variation in the form and size of these structures, and in some cases the mounds are surrounded by a rectangular enclosing wall (Figure 3). Function can only be speculated for these features, although the cairn-like features visible, and their positions in prominent positions on low foothills are suggestive of a possible funerary or religious use.

On the basis of satellite imagery, we can only start to speculate about the date and function of the Wadi Mawr or Hays sites, as well as of the many additional sites recorded in their hinterlands. The size of the enclosed areas and the evidence of structures at the Hays site are suggestive of an urban or proto-urban function, but it is difficult to draw a parallel with comparable sites in the region. The Wadi Mawr and the Hays sites appear connected, with similarities in their size and rampart form, with the latter’s combination of curved and angular corners, and near absence of perimeter towers. The two also sit in geographically similar positions

at the crook of a larger and smaller wadi channel, and both seem to lack any evidence of redundant field systems associated with these complexes. There is little to link them morphologically to the Islamic centres of Tihamah Plain such as Zabid and Mocha, but equally there little to link them to the Islamic or pre-Islamic centres of the Yemeni highlands and desert fringes, or the evidence of pre-Islamic settlement recorded elsewhere on Yemen’s Red Sea coastal strip (Phillips 1998; 2005). The EAMENA project will take investigations of the site forward through the use of historic aerial and satellite imagery, as well as potentially through the use of higher-resolution satellite imagery. Ultimately detailed investigation and survey on the ground is needed to further advance understanding of these two enigmatic sites.

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Figure 3. An example of the elongated mound site types identified in the Wadi Mawr hinterland.

# RESEARCH NOTICES

## Maritime Endangered Archaeology Project

Andreou, G.M., H.O. Huigens, R. Ortiz-Vazquez, J. Nikolaus, K. Westley, C. Safadi, C. Breen and L. Blue

Maritime cultural heritage is exceptionally vulnerable to natural processes such as shifting coastal geomorphology, sea-level rise, tropical cyclones and erosion, many of which are associated with climate change as explored in scholarly literature. This is also due to the nature and location of coastal, nearshore and underwater features, as well as the higher population density of coastal locales and associated demographic pressures, which often result in increasing building, industrial and touristic development. These are issues known both to governments and the academic community with a growing corpus of published coastal assessment methodologies implementing shoreline change models, terrestrial and UAV surveys, remote sensing, and community-engagement approaches. The remarkable range of tested methodologies on coastal monitoring in archaeology combined with the long history of archaeological research in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) offer an excellent opportunity for the assessment and monitoring of the rich maritime cultural heritage of this region.

Research into the maritime cultural heritage of the MENA is largely undertaken by non-local professionals, including important attempts to build capacity (Blue and Breen 2019; Demesticha et al. 2019). At a local level oftentimes the lack of infrastructure, expertise and often financial resources can inhibit long-term monitoring and management of maritime cultural heritage. Above all, the development of effective management and mitigation strategies for the loss of maritime cultural heritage is frequently hindered by a lack of baseline data relating to cultural heritage (e.g. site location) and potential threats (natural and anthropogenic).

The Maritime Endangered Archaeology (MarEA) Project aims to address some of these challenges and highlight the maritime cultural heritage of this region and its historic importance. MarEA is a 5-year collaborative project (2019-2024) based at the University of Southampton and Ulster University and funded by the Arcadia fund, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. MarEA aims to enhance the understanding of maritime cultural heritage and its environmental setting by documenting site locations and monitoring any disturbances and threats visible to maritime archaeological sites in the MENA region. One of the key aims of the project is to liaise with local government agencies and in-country partners to collaborate in achieving these goals and assist in the development of training programmes and tools designed to engage with local communities and enhance the efficiency of existing heritage management strategies.

The initial focus of the project is to rapidly create a digital inventory of sites and features, with emphasis on associated information on disturbances and threats using existing literature and remote sensing analysis (aerial photographs, satellite imagery), supplemented, where possible, with geophysical data and field observations (Figure 1). These observations are stored in an online database ([database.amena.org](http://database.amena.org)) and form the basis of subsequent monitoring of sites, and in-depth research on specific phenomena that are impacting these sites such as flooding, coastal erosion and anthropogenic alterations (Figures 2-3).



Figure 1: Ongoing documentation of pre-1960s shipwrecks in Oman (based on existing databases such as [www.wrecksite.eu](http://www.wrecksite.eu)).

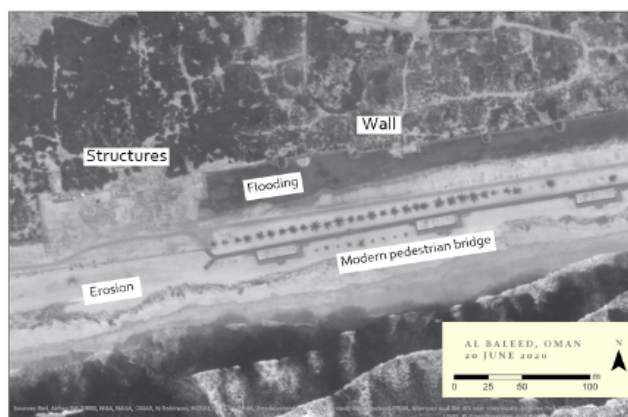
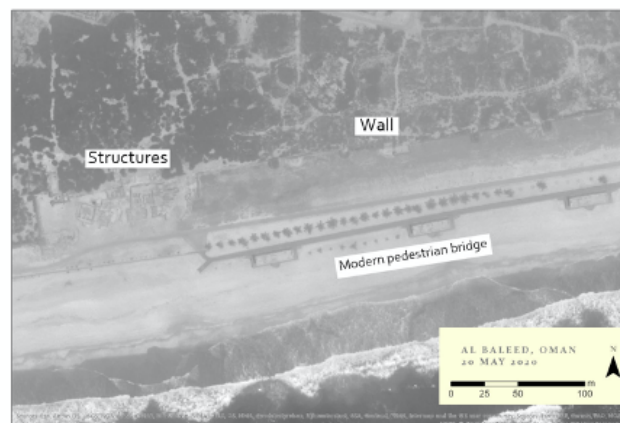
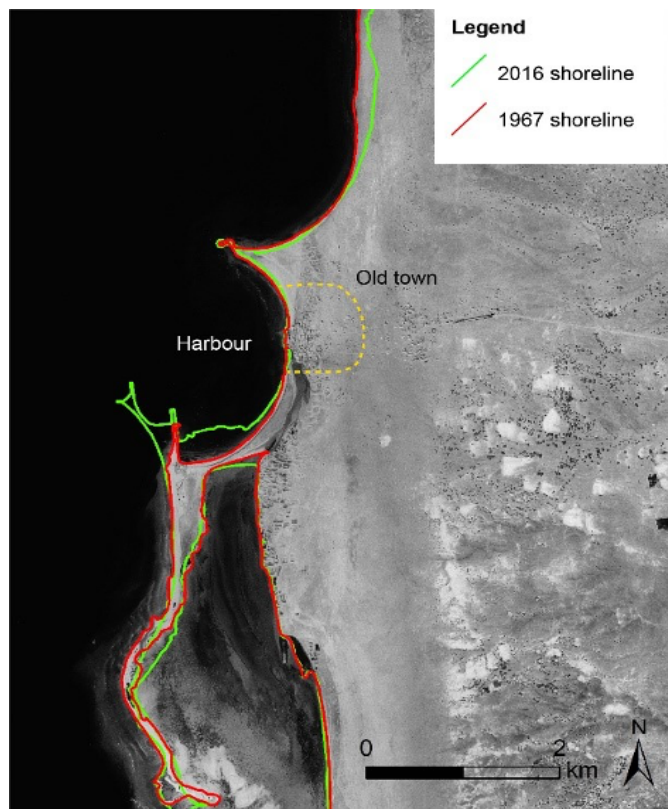


Figure 2: Flooding after Depression ARB1 cyclone event in Salalah, Oman. Close-up to Al Baleed (Imagery acquired and used with permission from Maxar Technologies; image analysis on ArcGIS Pro)

With its long and extensively documented maritime history, the Arabian Peninsula lends itself exceptionally well to the study of maritime archaeological landscapes, offering an extensive range of case studies from prehistoric cave sites and shell middens to historic fishing villages and ports. The region's geological, environmental, political and socio-economic diversity allows a more widely encompassing consideration of threats and disturbances to maritime cultural heritage, offering important examples for effective monitoring and management strategies.



**Figure 3: Shoreline development around the historic port town of Mokha, southwest Yemen between 1967 and 2016 (Corona imagery basemap acquired and used with permission of USGS; image analysis on ArcGIS Pro).**

Updates of MarEA's activities are posted in the format of tweets (@MarEA\_project) or blogs on the project's website (marea.soton.ac.uk) with a wide array of subjects including maritime archaeology and climate change, the heritage dimension of marine protected areas and the ethics of media representation of cultural heritage.

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## Remote Survey of Desert Kites in Northern Arabia

Michael Fradley and Francesca Simi

The past decade has seen a renewed interest in the form, function and spread of desert kites across the Middle East and beyond, in part led by the increasing availability of high-resolution satellite imagery on which the low, extensive form of the structures is easily observed (Kennedy et al. 2015). New remote-sensing survey by the Arcadia-funded Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA) project at the University of Oxford has furthered this research through the documentation of a new distribution of desert kites across northern Saudi Arabia and in to southern Iraq.



**Figure 1. An example of a kite documented by EAMENA in southern Iraq (Source: Bing Maps)**

Over 300 new desert kite sites have been documented, potentially forming a continuation of the known distributions running through Syria and eastern Jordan, through to the Jowf region of Saudi Arabia. This new data represents a significant increase in terms of the known number of desert kites in Saudi Arabia, and an important advance in our geographical understanding of their spread across the region. In addition to documenting desert kites, this survey has recorded a range of other site types, largely consisting of different cairn forms such as pendant and bullseye forms. In addition, a small number of 'meandering walls' were recorded, comparable to those identified in Jordan

and elsewhere in Saudi Arabia, and suggested as a possible precursor to the developed desert kite form (Betts and Burke 2015, 81-2).

The results of this new survey will be published shortly. The full dataset for the survey, including the kites and other recorded site types, will be uploaded on to the EAMENA online database once it is re-launched, and external users will be able to apply for access. The project can be followed via social media or its website ([www.eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk](http://www.eamena.arch.ox.ac.uk)).

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### **Analysis of Early Islamic Burials in Syria point to direct link with Arabia**

Andrew Petersen

For more than a decade a multi-national, interdisciplinary team have been studying the ritual Neolithic (PPNB) funerary area at Tell Qarassa in southern Syria (Santana et al 2015). Tell Qarassa lies at the southern edge of the Leja, a forbidding basalt covered region located between the ancient cities of Damascus and Bosra. Although the village of Qarassa appears to be a relatively recent settlement there is evidence of Roman, Byzantine and Medieval occupation both in the immediate area and in the wider region.



**Roman street in the southern Syrian city of Bosra. The city had had frequent trade with the Hijaz both in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times.**

Archaeological survey work in the region indicates that there was a substantial population during the Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic periods with a significant break at the end of the Umayyad period (circa 750). Large scale occupation

of the area appears to have resumed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and continued into the early Ottoman period (Guérin 2008, 268-272). Sixteenth century Ottoman tax registers indicate that the Leja region was occupied both by villages and nomadic groups including Turcoman and various Arab Bedouin tribes (Guérin 2002). The first Druze populations arrived in the region in the seventeenth century fleeing persecution in Mount Lebanon.

In addition to the ninth century BC cemetery the site of Tell Qarassa North also includes Neolithic houses and is located on the shores of a dried up lake. During excavation of the cemetery two graves were found in the upper levels which were thought to be of a later date. Both of the graves were set within stone lined rectangular pits aligned East-West with the head turned south in conformity with traditional Muslim burial practice. The fact that these were the only later burials at the site suggest that they were related in some way. Carbon dating of the remains revealed that both individuals died within ten years of each other sometime in the early 700's and as such were of considerable importance in understanding early Islamic society.

Given the potential significance of the graves a range of bio-archaeological analyses were subsequently carried out on the burials providing a fascinating insight into the identity of the individuals. At present there are no examples of DNA studies from the region which relate to this period and worldwide the only DNA analysis which relates to early Islamic burials is the study of two individuals from the south of France (Gleize et al 2016).

The full results of this research will be published in the journal *Nature Communications* (Srigyan et al. in press): however in the meantime a brief summary of the results will provide some idea of their potential significance. One of the most interesting findings of the Genomic analysis is that the individuals showed closer affinities to Arabia and in particular Bedouin groups rather than to Levantine groups as one might expect to find in Syria. The fact that the individuals were also Muslim provides a tantalising snapshot of population movement in the first century of Islam.

This finding can be linked to what we know of this region during the Late Antique and early Islamic times. There had been direct connections between southern Syria and the Hijaz for centuries (Sartre 1985, 129-131). In pre-Islamic times these connections are in the form of direct trade between Mecca and the Hauran. We know for example that one of Muhammad's ancestors Hāshīm organized a bi-annual caravan carrying grain from the Hauran to Mecca and that as a young man Muhammad travelled to Bosra as a merchant (Ṭabarī cited in Sartre 1985, 230 n.261 and 262). The direct connection between Mecca and the Hauran was continued in Islamic times with the annual pilgrimage or Hajj. In addition to the passage of pilgrims the Hauran continued to send supplies of food and camels to Mecca.

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### Gulf Institute of Gemology: An archaeometry analytical facility available "on-site"

Maya Musa

GIG – Gulf Institute of Gemology, Research Department - Bait Al Reem, 3rd Floor, Thaqafah St, Al Khuwair 133, Muscat - Sultanate of Oman

Although it might seem unlikely that a gemological institute can be of assistance to the world of archaeology, this article explains why such an institute is a valuable ally for archaeological research.

#### The GIG Institute

The Gulf Institute of Gemology (GIG) is an Omani para-government institution recently (2019) founded with the purpose to assist in the regulation, transparency and ethical business conduct in the gemstone and jewelry industry in Oman and the GCC region.

To achieve this, GIG has acquired a strong international character, as proven by its human resources -a heterogeneous group of experienced professionals- as well as with the application of the highest standards for gem material

analysis. In fact, GIG is part of an elite of ten International Gemological Institutes (CIBJO recognized), in part, because of its high-tech analytical equipment. Indeed, one of the main tasks performed by a Gemological Institute is to identify Gem materials. To do that in a more modern acceptance of "scientific gemology", the application of advanced analytical techniques (i.e. spectroscopies or chemistry analyses) are required, but analyzing the sample without any preparation is mandatory. This is the reason why GIG is equipped with three different spectroscopy lines (UV-Vis/NIR, FTIR and micro-ATR, micro-Raman spectroscopy), two chemical analyses (ED-XRF and LA-ICP-MS) and several imaging systems (i.e. optical microscopes, UV fluorescence imaging, optical gauge, etc.). All of those non-destructive techniques can be applied on the same sample in a complementary way, thanks to their specific accessories.

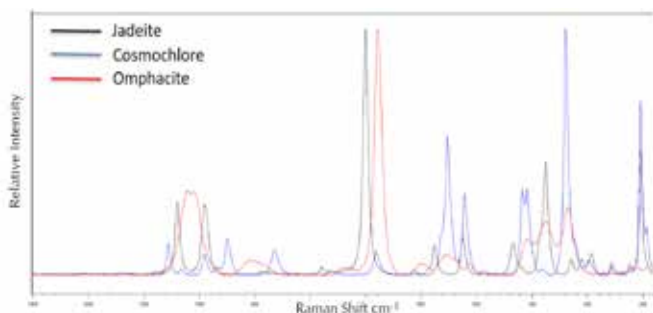
Similarly cultural heritage, archaeological samples and objets d'art require the same analytical attention and they cannot be analyzed by destructive techniques. For this reason, the High-Tech instruments available at GIG institute are suitable also for the archaeometry studies (Fig.1). In the next section some application examples are reported.



#### GIGArt Division and Archaeological Collaborations

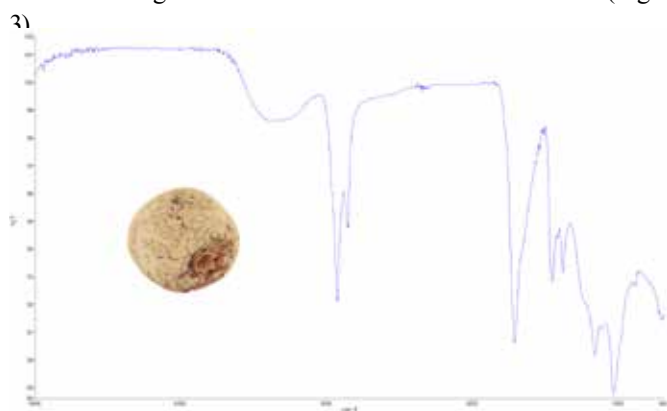
Starting from a vocation for studying antique jewellery, in the recent years the GIG team has been involved in several international collaborations for cultural heritage. An example is "The Chiaravalle Cross" where a multidisciplinary approach has been applied for a complete characterization of this medieval masterpiece [Di Martino, et al. 2019]. Consequently, a division of the GIG Research department has been dedicated to cultural heritage, archaeological and objets d'art research projects, the GIGArt division. Starting from the end of 2019, GIGArt division has been involved in several international collaborations –e.g. the French Archaeological Mission "Archéologie des rivages de la mer d'Arabie", having the chance to analyse several archaeological samples found during the 2019 excavation campaign. A deep micro-Raman characterization, including Raman mapping, combined with ED-XRF analyses on

Neolithic axes have been carried out [Al-Kindi, et al., 2021 submitted]. The micro-Raman spectroscopy is a very useful non-destructive technique capable of characterizing the samples. Actually, this technique finds its application in many sectors, due to its versatility (i.e. cultural heritage, minerals, pigments, organic chemistry, etc). In a typical Raman experiment, monochromatic radiation (the laser source) is used to excite the sample. The Raman scattered photons present differences in the energy corresponding to the specific vibrational modes of the sample and characterizing the material like a fingerprint (Fig. 2) [Schubnel, 1992]. The latest generation of micro-Raman spectrophotometers are also able to create maps, on the



basis of the sample's Raman scattering. This application's results are particularly suitable i.e. for polyphasic samples, where the composition, the mineral's distribution or the mineral's crystallinity are uneven. Indeed, the Spectrophotometer is coupled in a confocal way with an optical microscope and the analyses are spatially solved.

GIGArt has also been involved in collaboration with the Peretti Museum Foundation, in a project aimed to increase the knowledge of amber, especially for geographic origin determination, where an innovative methodology based on the application of the micro-ATR technique coupled with UV Fluorescence Imaging has been carried out [Musa, et al., 2021]. This methodology's results are particularly suitable for the archaeological amber beads and their identification (Fig. 3)



## Conclusion

GIG Research Department is also available for high-tech courses and, as soon as the restrictions due to the COVID-19 will be lifted, it will be possible for Masters' degree or PhD.

students to perform their analyses at the GIG facility. In the meantime, we are organizing virtual tours as well as on-demand courses.

In conclusion, as “an archaeometry analytical facility available on-site” GIGArt division's goal is to assist the archaeological teams working in the Arabian Peninsula with high-tech analytical support.

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## WORK IN PROGRESS

### A historical perspective on Arabia's marine life: call for collaborators

Dr. Alec Moore



On arrival at Aden in the 1870s, the boat on which the German naturalist Ernst Haeckel was travelling was “... surrounded by Arab boats, whose... passengers clambered on board to offer [for sale] ... huge saws from the sawfish...”. Sawfish – huge, shark-like rays, are now essentially extinct in the Arabian region. It is only by piecing together evidence like Haeckel's diary note that allows us to understand how incomplete our modern perception of what is ‘normal’, based on a few decades of recent scientific data, can be of a degraded ecosystem. This ‘shifting baseline syndrome’

is one of the key areas that the growing field of marine historical ecology hopes to address. By documenting the former status of marine animal populations, we are better informed to set ambitious targets for their restoration that will benefit biodiversity, fisheries, and those who depend on them.

I am a marine biologist, and much of my previous research has been on sharks and rays in the Arabian region. While much of this has been more ‘conventional’ marine biology, I am increasingly interested in multidisciplinary approaches using a variety of less conventional data sources that mention marine animals or their products – such as historical documents (e.g. navigational pilots, charts, ship’s logs, expedition narratives/journals, old photos), trade archives (e.g. for shark’s fins, ambergris), art, archaeology and interviews with fishing, pearl diving and maritime communities. My aim is to use these to document the former distribution, abundance and diversity of marine animals in Arabian seas (such as sharks, rays, whales and dolphins, turtles, fish). However, the vast expanse of potentially useful material is bewildering, especially to someone lacking formal research experience in these disciplines.

Are any IASA members working in these – or related – disciplines aware of potentially useful sources on marine animals? If so, I would be really grateful to hear from you to discuss potential collaborations.

Many thanks in advance,

Dr. Alec Moore  
a.moore@bangor.ac.uk  
School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University  
IUCN Shark Specialist Group (Indian Ocean Region)

## The Gulf as a Forgotten WWII Operational Theatre

Dr. Saif Albedwawi

For quite some years I have been searching for information on the role of the Arab Gulf States during WWII. It seems that it has been forgotten by researchers as a theatre of war and is not even to be found in the literature of military historians, with the exception of a few short papers written by local residents<sup>1</sup>.

There are five main contributors in this arena: first, the massive role of the RAF that kept all the German, Italian, and Japanese movements under surveillance. Second, the US Air force deployment to Sharjah that lasted for almost two years not recognized by any writer<sup>2</sup>. Third, the role of the Iraqi Levies in protecting the only active airfield on the Trucial coast at Al Mahattah, Sharjah. Of these Iraqi soldiers, originally recruited to be part of the Habbaniya air field in Iraq during WWII, one squadron was sent to Sharjah almost every six months to guard the RAF aircraft whilst they were performing their missions in supporting Allied warfare. A fourth source of information is related to the

air crashes in the Emirates of both US and British aircrafts during the war. These crashes were not the result of combat but rather of mechanical failure. Ali Iqbal a local researcher, has located some 19 aircraft that crashed at various sites within the present day UAE.

The fifth source is rather rare and almost unbelievable. There are two known submarines that were sunk in the Gulf area. These boats are still sitting on the bottom of the sea without any work on them. For example, the German submarine sunk by RAF in 1943, found and located close to Fujairah’s coast<sup>3</sup>.

In summary, there is a need to carry out in-depth research to recognise this “Forgotten Theatre of War” in the Arabian Desert of today’s UAE and to produce a work that records the activities of the various forces that were stationed in the Trucial Coast during WWII, and their role in defeating the German-Italian Axis.

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Dr. Saif Albedwawi  
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The writer with two Bedouin visiting the site of an air crash at Sharjah  
Source: The writer’s collection

## **Call for Book proposals: Cultural Heritage, Art and Museums in the Middle East**

Series Editors Dr Sarina Wakefield, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester (Sarina.wakefield@leicester.ac.uk) and Dr Sabrina DeTurk, Associate Professor, College of Arts and Creative Enterprises, Zayed University, Dubai (sabrina@sabrinadeturk.com)

Cultural Heritage, Art and Museums in the Middle East book series critically explores how representation and identity are connected to cultural developments in the Middle East at various levels – local, national, regional, and transnational – in the fields of cultural heritage, art and museum studies. Titles in the series engage with Middle Eastern cultural heritage, art and museums situated within a broader, global context. By highlighting these global connections, it aims to challenge the marginalisation of studies of the Middle East into the realm of regional studies.

Titles in the series will provide much-needed resources and

reference points for academics, practitioners and students. If you would like to discuss submitting a proposal, please contact the series editors.

### **A request from Werner Daum**

Werner Daum is preparing a small exhibition on Yemen to be held in Kuwait. The exhibition focuses on Yemen in antiquity and traditional folklore. In this context, he is looking for a video or short film of Yemenis performing the Janbiya dance. He has found several on the internet, but the backgrounds are not sufficient.

If you have anything that might be suitable, please contact him at daum.werner@gmx.de

Werner Daum was the curator of the Munich Yemen exhibition, 1987/88. He edited the catalogue of that exhibition, as well as the catalogue of the 1999 exhibition. His other books include *The Queen of Saba*, and *Folktales from Yemen*.

# THE STATEHORN PROJECT

## **The StateHorn Project: Authority, Legitimacy and Social Diversity in the Horn of Africa (11th-16th centuries).**

Jorge de Torres Rodríguez

In comparison to other areas of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa, archaeological research in Somaliland has, for different reasons, traditionally been neglected. Only recently several researchers have started to systematically document and publish the rich and complex archaeological record of Somaliland. Since 2015, a Spanish team from the Institute of the Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (Incipit-CSIC) directed by Alfredo González-Ruibal and Jorge de Torres Rodríguez has been surveying and excavating in central and western Somaliland.



**Figure 1: Houses at the medieval town of Fardowsa during the 2020 campaign ©The Incipit Archaeological Project in Somaliland**

The project has so far documented in detail about thirty-five main sites and hundreds of minor archaeological remains,

most of them cairns. One of the chief goals of the project (González-Ruibal et al. 2017; González-Ruibal and Torres 2018; Torres 2020) has been to connect the archaeological record of Somaliland with the wider geographical and historical landscape of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa.

The Incipit-CSIC project has a vast chronological scope, covering the entire history of Somaliland, from Antiquity to the 19th century. Yet, most of the archaeological sites documented so far could be dated between the 13th and 16th centuries, a period in which most of Somaliland was either under the direct rule or the strong influence of the Islamic sultanates of Ifat and Adal. These sultanates challenged the power of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, established close ties with the Arabian Peninsula and other Muslim territories and provided stability to the trade routes that connected the Horn of Africa with the rest of the world. The apparent success of these medieval states in controlling large territories and in integrating peoples from different societies and cultural backgrounds offers a sharp contrast with the problems of governance and legitimacy endured by many of the states in the Horn of Africa today. Indeed, nowadays the Horn has become a region of extreme political instability and of weak state structures, as exemplified by the Somali State, which is often presented as the epitome of a failed state.

Based on these premises and on the previous work conducted in Somaliland, in 2020 we launched a new project, “StateHorn: Pathways to Statehood: Authority, Legitimacy and Social Diversity in the Horn of Africa (11th-16th centuries).” The project aims to analyse the strategies that medieval states in the Horn of Africa used in order to provide long term stability to the region, tracing the

structures whereupon the state's legitimacy was buttressed and finding out how these states related with their own populations and with other neighbouring states.

The project is funded by a European Research Council Starting Grant and it will run for five years. During this time the StateHorn team will develop a multidisciplinary program and carry out the most comprehensive study of medieval statehood in the Horn of Africa to date. Relying on Somaliland as a case study, the project will combine different disciplines, from archaeology to historiography, linguistics, literature and ethnography and pursue five research lines, which were deemed central in the study of the phenomena of statehood in the region: Territory, Material Culture, Written and Oral Sources, Urbanisation and Trade.



Figure 2: Remains of the main mosque of the medieval town of Abasa (western Somaliland) ©The Incipit Archaeological Project in Somaliland

The StateHorn team will excavate in five different sites which are expected to provide relevant data (both qualitative and quantitatively) to understand how states and communities related to each other in Somaliland during

the medieval era. Thus, two major towns, a small hamlet, a caravan station and a coastal trading post will be studied and comprehensively published. The work of survey and excavation will be complemented with information from other medieval sites in the region and in the neighbouring areas occupied by Djibuti and Ethiopia as well as with the analysis of the great amount of geographical and historical data available.

Altogether, the study of these sites and of the larger context will provide a comprehensive corpus of information about medieval Somaliland, its links with the surrounding areas and on the process of emergence and consolidation of states in the region. Moreover, buttressed on the archaeological and historical findings, StateHorn aims to propose a theory of statehood in the Horn of Africa which helps in analysing the current political situation in the area and in other places where weak or failed states have emerged. Updated information about the project will be available at the project website ([www.statehorn.com](http://www.statehorn.com)).

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS ON ARABIA

Cleuziou, S., Tosi, M., 2020. *In the Shadow of the Ancestors: The Prehistoric Foundations of the Early Arabian Civilization in Oman* Second Expanded Edition, Frenéz D., Garba, R., eds Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman ISBN 9781789697889

Hatke, G., Ruzicka, R 2021. *South Arabian Long-Distance Trade in Antiquity: "Out of Arabia"* Cambridge Scholars Publishing ISBN13: 978-1-5275-6456-5

Ibrahim, M., M., Strachan, L., M., 2020 *The Tangible and Intangible Cultural Landscape of Wadi Bani Kharus: Investigations in the Sultanate of Oman* Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. ISBN 9781789698053

Maestri, E., 2019 *The Arabian City and its Territory. Historical Identity and Heritage Issues*, EDUCatt Università Cattolica. ISBN 9788893354493

Morris, N., Porter, V., Tripp, C. 2020. *Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa*, British Museum Press ISBN 9780714111957

Reisz, T., 2020. *Showpiece City: How Architecture Made Dubai*, Stanford University Press, ISBN: 9781503609884

Schmidt, C., 2020 *Die Bestattungsgruben in Bat (Arabia Orientalis I)* Archaeopress Publishing Ltd. ISBN 9781789697391

Spalton, A., Al Hikmani, H. M., 2021 *Dhofar: From Monsoon Mountains to Sand Seas Celebrating the Natural*

*Diversity of Oman's Dhofar Region*, Gilgamesh Publishing  
ISBN: 9781908531858

van Roode, S. M., 2020 *Silver & Frankincense. Scent and personal adornment in the Arab World*, Blikveld Uitgevers Publishers ISBN 9789492940018

Vogler-Fiesser, G., Al Mahri, M H., 2020. *Dhofar's Nomads: How Oman's Renaissance Changed A Lifestyle Forever*: Gilgamesh Publishing ISBN 978-1908531735

Wakefield, S. (ed.) 2020. *Cultural Heritage, Transnational Narratives and Museum Franchising in Abu Dhabi*, Routledge ISBN 9781138088221

Wakefield, S. (ed.) 2020. *Museums of the Arabian Peninsula Historical Developments and Contemporary Discourses*, Routledge ISBN 9780367148447

Ziolkowski, M. C., *Fujairah's Date Palm Gardens: a preliminary survey*, published by H.H Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Sharqi ISBN 9789948359531

## AWARDS AND PRIZES

### **Aga Khan Award for Architecture**

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is given every three years to projects that set new standards of excellence in architecture, planning practices, historic preservation and landscape architecture. Through its efforts, the Award seeks to identify and encourage building concepts that successfully address the needs and aspirations of societies across the world, in which Muslims have a significant presence.

The Award seeks nominations that represent the broadest possible range of architectural interventions, but for the 15th cycle (2020-2022), it encourages the submission of projects in rural landscapes, urban peripheries and those that deal with public space at all scales.

To be eligible for consideration in the 2022 Award cycle, projects must be completed between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2020 and should have been in use for at least one full year. The identification and nomination of projects is now ongoing, the deadline for this phase is 15 September 2021. More information here: <https://www.akdn.org/architecture>

### **The American Institute for Yemeni Studies**

The American Institute for Yemeni Studies annually holds two competitions for fellowship programs supporting research on Yemen, funded by grants from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Yemeni researchers awarded the fellowship grants for 2020 met in the AIYS office, under the direction of the Resident Director Dr. Salwa Dammaj, to give their presentations.

The grantees included Mr. Ahmed al-Gabali who presented his research on "Sufism in Yemen: Its Social and Political Impacts", Dr. Amna Al-Nasiri, professor of Philosophy at Sana'a University and a very well-known Yemeni painter who talked about her research "Change in Arabic Public Art during and after the Arab Spring: The Examples of Graffiti in Yemen" and Anwar Hayir, a researcher interested in antiquities, explained his research titled "Ancient

Inscriptions in the Area of Bani Dubyan." For the other award recipients and more information, visit <https://www.aiys.org/fellowships-2020>.

### **British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize**

The British-Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize was founded thanks to an endowment of the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Foundation. The prize attracts around 50 nominations from some 20 publishers each year. The prize is awarded for the best scholarly work on the Middle East. Normally the chronological remit of the prize will be from the rise of Islam until the present day, but outstanding scholarly entries from the pre-Islamic era may also be considered.

The 2020 winner was *Electric News in Colonial Algeria* by Arthur Asseraf (Oxford University Press). *Electric News* examines a range of sources in multiple languages across colonial society and offers a new understanding of the spread of news. New technologies such as the printing press, telegraph, cinema and radio interacted with older media like songs, rumours, letters and manuscripts with the French government watching anxiously and monitoring Algerians' reactions. The French surveillance network often ended up spreading rather than controlling the flow of news. *Electric News* helps us reconsider the relationship between time, media and historical change. The runners up were *Modern Things On Trial: Islam's Global and Material Reformation in the Age of Rida, 1865-1935* by Leor Halevi (Columbia University Press) and *Friends of the Emir: Non-Muslim State Officials in Premodern Islamic Thought* by Luke B. Yarborough (Cambridge University Press). <https://www.bkfsprize.com/>

### **The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF)**

The International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) is the most prestigious and important literary prize in the Arab world. Its aim is to reward excellence in contemporary Arabic creative writing and to encourage the readership of high quality Arabic literature internationally through the

translation and publication of winning and shortlisted novels in other major languages.

The 2020 winner was *The Spartan Court* by Abdelouahab Aissaoui. The novel, published by Dar Mim, follows the interconnected lives of five characters in Algiers from 1815 to 1833. Muhsin al-Musawi, Chair of the 2020 Judging Panel said “readers gain a multi-layered insight into the historical occupation of Algeria and, from this, the conflicts of the entire Mediterranean region, with characters embodying different interests and intersecting visions.”

In addition to the prize of USD \$50,000, funding will be provided for the English translation of *The Spartan Court*. The International Prize for Arabic Fiction is an annual literary prize for prose fiction in Arabic. It is sponsored by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi and is run with the support, as its mentor, of the Booker Prize Foundation in London.

### **The Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize**

The Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize was established jointly in 1986 by the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund and BRISMES in memory of Dr Leigh Douglas who was killed in Beirut in 1986. The prize is awarded annually to the writer of the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic in the Social Sciences or Humanities awarded by a British University in the previous calendar year. The deadline for submission of entries is 31st January. The current value of the prize is £600 for the winner and £150 for the runner up.

The 2020 winners were

Winner: Ayşe Arslan for their thesis *Industrial Workers in the Garment Industry, House-Workers in the Family: Women's Productive and Reproductive Labour in Izmir, Turke'* (SOAS University of London)

Runner Up: Adélie Chevée *The Emergence of Syrian Grassroots Intellectuals: Critique and Political Commitment in the Revolutionary Press (2011-2017)* (SOAS UoL)

Honourable Mention: Simon Leese *Longing for Salmá and Hind: (Re)producing Arabic Literature in 18th and 19th-Century North India* (SOAS UoL)

More information at <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/awards-and-prizes/leigh-douglas-memorial-prize#>

### **Rawabi Holding Awards**

The Rawabi Holding Awards honour exceptional individual efforts in fostering friendship, understanding and positive relations between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since 2007 they have been awarded annually to one Saudi and one British citizen. The prizes are sponsored by Mr Abdulaziz al Turki. Nominations are invited from members and the candidates are then voted for by The Saudi British Society Committee. The 2020 winners

are Lulwah Al Homoud and David Lloyd OBE. Lulwah Al Homoud is a Saudi artist, freelance Curator and Visual Communication Expert, born in Riyadh and now based in Dubai and London. She is a graduate of King Saud University and Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London. Her work combines geometric abstraction with influences from traditional Islamic art and is in museum and other collections around the world. Lulwah is the Founder and General Manager of LAH Art Foundation supporting local artists in the UK and Saudi Arabia and bridging the cultural gap between the two Kingdoms.

David Lloyd OBE studied Modern and Classical Arabic at the University of Cambridge and was a British Diplomat until his retirement in 2000. He served in the British Trade Office in Al Khobar and has spent more than 20 years helping to promote trade and better relations between the UK and Saudi Arabia. He has been a Trustee of the Saudi British Society for over a decade. More information see: <https://saudibritishsociety.org.uk/rawabi-holding-awards/>

### **The Saif Ghobash–Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation**

The prize is an annual award of £3,000, made to the translator(s) of a published translation in English of a full-length imaginative and creative Arabic work of literary merit published after, or during the year 1967, and first published in English translation the year prior to the award.

The Saif Ghobash-Banipal Prize aims to raise the profile of contemporary Arabic literature as well as honouring the important work of individual translators in bringing the work of established and emerging Arab writers to the attention of the wider world. It was established by Banipal, the magazine of modern Arab literature in English translation, and the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature and is administered by the Society of Authors in the United Kingdom. The deadline for entries and publication of works each year is 31 March.

Kay Heikkinen was awarded the 2020 prize for her translation of the novel *Velvet* by Huzama Habayeb, published by Hoopoe Fiction. From the judges' report: “The novel is an intense and vivid story of one woman's life in a Palestinian refugee camp, told with sensitivity to the sensuous but tragic world of its heroine but above all to her disturbing and almost heroic defiance of reality... Hawwa's story is told in a rich, carefully crafted Arabic that represents a significant challenge for any translator, requiring stamina and resilience as well as accuracy and precision. The judges were impressed by the way in which Kay Heikkinen's translation has succeeded in conveying not only the sense but also the mood and emotion of the original, bringing to life a narrative that vividly portrays the repressive life of ordinary Palestinian women while scrupulously avoiding any hint of political platitude.”

More information at <http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk/prize/>

# GRANTS & AWARDS AVAILABLE

*Please note that a number of grants and awards programmes, particularly scholarships, have been suspended at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## **ALIPH Foundation**

ALIPH invites applications for projects that protect or rehabilitate cultural heritage threatened or damaged by conflicts around the world. The projects must develop protection measures or deliver concrete conservation or rehabilitation outcomes. In addition, they must: contribute to local capacity building at all levels of expertise, in particular by offering on-the-job training; contribute to awareness raising on cultural heritage protection; promote cultural diversity and gender equality; contribute to economic and social sustainable development, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. for the 4th call, ALIPH particularly encourages submissions focusing on: the fight against looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods; the protection, conservation, and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in Yemen.

The deadline is 16 April 2021, 3pm CEST

<https://www.aliph-foundation.org/>

## **American Institute for Yemeni Studies**

The Abdulaziz al-Maqaleh Book Award for Yemeni Heritage is a competition for funding the publication of academic research books in Arabic by Yemeni scholars in Yemen. Preference is given to books that focus on Yemeni heritage. Submissions are reviewed by a publication committee of AIYS members. Yemeni scholars with a draft book or monograph (in English or Arabic) in the humanities, arts or social sciences ready for publication should submit their manuscript (in Word or pdf) via <https://www.aiys.org/book-award>. The deadline for 2021 is past. The deadline for the 2022 award is November 1, 2021.

## **The Anglo-Omani Society**

The Anglo-Omani Society (AOS) is a charitable organisation working with the objective of preserving the longstanding friendship between Britain and Oman. The Trustees of The Anglo-Omani Society accept applications for activities that contribute towards the Society's charitable objectives. Applications are assessed at board meetings held approximately every quarter. The criteria for selection include promoting Anglo-Omani friendship, involving both British and Omani participants, providing lasting benefit to participants in terms of new formal training or skills, alignment with Oman's 2040 Vision National Priorities, significant reach and potential to meet a wider audience than the existing Society. For more information: <https://www.aosoc.org/grant-application>

## **The Barakat Trust**

The Barakat Trust awards are open to applicants worldwide in the fields of research into the history of the art and architecture, and the archaeology and material culture of Islamic societies, including archaeological and other fieldwork, and research trips; the conservation, preservation, restoration, and presentation to the public of artefacts, buildings and archaeological sites produced by Islamic societies; the work of libraries, museums and other public collections in the conservation, documentation, and presentation of artefacts and manuscripts produced by Islamic societies in their broadest sense, including the digitisation of archives and collections, and the training of conservation and curatorial staff; the organisation of events intended to further research in the history of the art, architecture, archaeology, and material culture of Islamic societies, including colloquia and conferences, lectures, seminars and workshops, exhibitions, and attendance at such events; The closing date for applications is 31st March. Further information on the grants can be found at <https://barakat.org/grants/>

## **Beatrice de Cardi Awards**

The awards, administered by the Society of Antiquaries of London are endowed through a bequest from Beatrice de Cardi FSA who undertook pioneering fieldwork and research in the Arabian Gulf and Pakistan and was formerly President of the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia and the first Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology. The awards are for the furtherance of archaeological research by field survey, excavation and the publication of the fieldwork in the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the Pakistan province of Baluchistan.

Applications will be accepted for: projects where the Society will be the main or a significant financial contributor; support for definable objectives with specific, measurable outcomes within larger projects funded from a range of sources (but not simply 'topping up' applications to major funding bodies).

Awards are made on an annual basis with possible renewal for up to two further years. A new application is required each year and no project will be funded for more than three years. Awards are for £5,000 to £15,000 and the deadline for applications is 15 January annually. For more information: <https://www.sal.org.uk/grant/beatrice-de-cardi-awards/>

## **British Academy**

The British Academy provides a variety of grants and fellowships to support academic research, career development and wider engagement across the full range of the humanities and social sciences. Funding opportunities cover UK and international research from the postdoctoral level upwards, supporting the best ideas, individuals

and intellectual resources. For full details: [https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/?order=-last\\_published\\_at](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/?order=-last_published_at)

### **British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI)**

The BISI offers a range of grants to support public events and academic work on Iraq and neighbouring countries that are not covered by BASIS-sponsored institutions. The coverage includes anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, language and related disciplines within the arts, humanities, and social sciences from the earliest times until the present day.

BISI offers three types of grant, normally for residents of the United Kingdom:

academic grants for UK-led research projects and conferences: annual deadline 1 February

grants to Iraqi Visiting Scholars: annual deadline 1 February

outreach grants for public events and activities, usually in the UK and/or Iraq: annual deadline 1 October

<http://www.bisi.ac.uk/content/grants>

### **British-Yemeni Society Annual Academic Grant**

As part of its educational mission, the British–Yemeni Society offers a £500 grant annually to assist with academic study related to Yemen. Applications are invited from anyone, of any nationality, carrying out research in, or on Yemen, at a British or Yemeni University.

Study in any subject or field may be considered, so long as it is concerned with Yemen, and is for a specific qualification.

The deadline for applications is 31st May each year, but there may be flexibility. For more information, please write to the Secretary of the Society, Louise Hosking, at the e-mail: [sec@b-ys.org.uk](mailto:sec@b-ys.org.uk).

### **The Islamic Manuscript Association**

The Islamic Manuscript Association Grant Scheme was established to further the aims of the Association by supporting the projects and research of its members in the field of Islamic manuscripts.

The Grant Scheme is among the major ongoing activities of the Association, and is one of the main ways in which the Association is able to actively benefit its members' work with manuscript collections around the world. The maximum available grant is £5000 per project, and a number of awards are made annually. The Grant Scheme will run annually until further notice.

Work that we aim to support includes, but is not limited to: projects related to preservation and conservation conservation of an individual manuscript or group of manuscripts purchase of tools, equipment, and supplies for preservation or conservation projects tests and laboratory analysis of pigments, papers, or other materials.

For more details: <https://www.islamicmanuscript.org/grants/GrantScheme.aspx>

### **Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund**

The Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund was established in memory of the life of Dr Leigh Douglas who was killed in Beirut in April 1986. Each year the Leigh Douglas Memorial Fund offers two or three small grants (in the region of £300) to assist scholars of any nationality whose research involves the study of Yemeni history, culture, economics, politics or society.

Applications should include a brief curriculum vitae, an outline of the relevant research project and a letter of reference. There are two annual deadlines for applications: 1 November and 1 May.

For further enquiries and applications contact Dr Venetia Porter - [venetia@trippiyasa.demon.co.uk](mailto:venetia@trippiyasa.demon.co.uk)

### **Al Qasimi Foundation**

The Al Qasimi Foundation's Doctoral Research Grants encourage scholars from a wide range of disciplines and professional fields to undertake research toward informing policymaking in the United Arab Emirates. The Grants are open to PhD students from all nationalities studying at an accredited university in the United Arab Emirates or abroad. Doctoral Research Grants financially support PhD candidates in the research phase of their dissertations.

Currently, two awards are available each year for applied research projects that have Ras Al Khaimah as a primary site for data gathering and analysis. The Grant covers all student expenses associated with their field research in the United Arab Emirates. Recipients are expected to produce one to two working papers as part of the Grant and make at least one presentation to the local research community. More information: <https://alqasimi-cp.enquire.cloud/round/RND-0000016/102>

### **Royal Asiatic Society - The Sir George Staunton Prize**

The Royal Asiatic Society organises a prize for articles produced by young scholars (someone in the process of completing their PhD, or someone who has been awarded their doctorate within the last five years) working on topics related to the history, archaeology, literature, language, religion, anthropology and art of Asia. Award winning submissions will be published in the Society's peer-reviewed Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. No rigid limit is imposed on the length of the contribution but it should be appreciated that the most suitable length is c. 6,000 words. Enquiries to [cdb@royalasiaticsociety.org](mailto:cdb@royalasiaticsociety.org)

### **Sir William Luce Fellowship**

The Sir William Luce Fellowship is awarded annually to a scholar at post-doctoral level, diplomat, politician, or business executive, working on those parts of the Middle East to which Sir William Luce devoted his working life (Iran, the Gulf states, South Arabia and Sudan), and is hosted by Durham University during the Easter term of each academic year. The Fund is looking for research proposals that examine historic aspects of Iran, the Gulf States,

South Arabia and Sudan that throw light on contemporary events. The Committee administering the Sir William Luce Memorial Fund reserves the right not to make an appointment to a Fellowship.

The Fellowship, tenable jointly in the Institute for Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies and Trevelyan College, entitles the holder to full access to departmental and other University facilities and also carries a grant, accommodation and all meals. The Fellow is expected to deliver a lecture on the subject of his or her research which will be designated 'The Sir William Luce Lecture', and should be cast in such a way as to form the basis of a paper to be published in a special edition of the Durham Middle East Papers series.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic the 2020 fellow's residency has been put forward to 2021. Consequently no fellow will be recruited this summer. The application period for the 2022 fellowship will begin in June 2021 and run to a date in the autumn that will be announced here: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/imeis/flagship/luce/>

### **SOAS Scholarships and Studentships**

The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of

London, offers numerous scholarships with relevance to Arabian studies. The focus ranges from supporting students from specific countries to particular degrees or areas of research.

For further information see <https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/>

### **Thesiger-Oman Fellowships**

The Thesiger-Oman International Fellowships offer two awards annually of £8,000 to post-doctoral researchers to advance geographical knowledge, involving fieldwork, in an arid or semi-arid environment. Preference will be given to research in the Middle East and other areas visited by Sir Wilfred Thesiger. One award is given for human and one for physical geography. These awards were founded with the support of the late Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said al-Said as a memorial to Thesiger.

Applicants must be Fellows or members of the Society with at least three years' post-doctoral experience. The Fellowships are open to applicants of any nation. Individuals or groups may apply for this award. Deadline: 23 November. See <https://www.rgs.org/in-the-field/in-the-field-grants/research-grants/thesiger-oman-fellowship/>

## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

*A number of conferences, events and exhibitions were postponed in 2020, but we are pleased to report on some conferences and workshops that went ahead virtually.*

### **Language and Nature in South Arabia Workshop: A Pandemic Success!**

Kamala Russell (UC Berkeley), Janet Watson (Leeds), Fabio Gasparini (Freie University Berlin)

As the COVID-19 pandemic made the use of Zoom and the scheduling of virtual seminars routine, Janet Watson (Leeds) saw an opportunity to form a new scholarly community. Starting on March 23, 2020, the day the UK went into lockdown, she initiated the Language and/or Nature in Southern Arabia workshop. Since then, this workshop has become a sustainable and regular platform to bring together researchers from across the world, native speakers, professionals, and others through their interests in the diverse and at times precarious linguistic, cultural, and natural resources of Southern Arabia.

The workshop met weekly from 23rd March until 14th July, 2020, after which it became bimonthly, and now, the workshop continues into 2021 with monthly meetings. At the time of writing, 27 online workshops had been held. The 2021 schedule of workshops features keynotes from speakers who have had long careers doing research in Southern Arabia (Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, Miranda Morris, Leonid Kogan and Maria Bulakh) as well as symposia

highlighting the work of PhD student and early-career researchers from the Arabian Peninsula.

Over the past year, the Language and/or Nature in South Arabia workshop has convened researchers from over 20 countries across Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas, at times with up to 60 attendees! Through the work of Professor Janet Watson at the University of Leeds, Kamala Russell (PhD Candidate, Anthropology, UC Berkeley) and Dr. Fabio Gasparini (Freie University Berlin), the workshop has hosted many distinguished speakers, early-career researchers and members of Southern Arabian communities. Notable for their interdisciplinarity, distinguished speakers have included: Sam Liebhaber (Middlebury), Ahmed al-Jallad (Ohio), Becki Maddock (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, London), Miranda Morris (St Andrews), Jane Bickmore-Jaffer MBE (Let's Read Programme, Oman), Richard Porter (Friends of Soqatra), Shahina Ghazanfar (Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew), Craig Cornelius (Google), Nick Jeffries (Ellen MacArthur Foundation), Denzil Phillips (Global Frankincense Alliance), Trygve Harris (Founder and CEO Enfleurance, Inc.), Barry Heselwood (Leeds) and Ahmed al-Harrasi (University of Nizwa).

A key feature of the workshop series has been its diversity both in terms of content and speakers, and the way it highlights the symbiotic relationship between indigenous languages and the natural environment in which they develop. It has featured talks of ongoing and polished

research that highlight the linguistic and dialectal diversity of Southern Arabia, including: Modern South Arabian, Omani and Saudi Arabic Dialects, Shihhi, Kumzari and Fayfi. Talks have covered a range of interdisciplinary topics from historical linguistics, folkloristics and local literary traditions, ecological knowledge, linguistic topics around temporality, phonetics and phonology, language shift and preservation, and disaster management. A significant number of these talks have been co-presented and delivered at least partly in the languages of Southern Arabia, including Arabic, Mehri, Shehret, and Kumzari. A number of themed interdisciplinary workshops have also been held including Frankincense (14th July 2020), Soqatra (15th September 2020), Kumzari (12th January 2021), and the phonetics and phonology of MSAL (9th February 2021).

The workshop series has encouraged partnerships and new collaborations between scholars in the UK, European and North American institutions and native speakers, creating new routes for both participatory scholarship and pathways into research careers. Encouraging team presentations, and presentations from scholars of different professional backgrounds and levels, the series has led to unprecedented exchanges that promise to yield publications and future collaborative projects. The publication of an edited volume by the workshop hosts is currently being discussed. Our aim is to give a collective interdisciplinary portrait of the different research activities carried out by the many presenters who took part in the workshop.

This workshop series has raised the profile of the Modern South Arabian Languages (MSAL) as well as Kumzari and the Arabic dialects of Southern Arabia, attracting the attention of researchers and the public to the attrition of the indigenous languages and Arabic dialects, cultures and ecosystems in the Arabian Peninsula. In 2021, the workshop will meet on the first or second Tuesday of every month, at 3pm GMT. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Janet, Fabio, or Kamala at (j.c.e.watson@leeds.ac.uk; fabiogsparini@gmail.com; russellkamala@gmail.com).

### **Islamic Heritage 2020 3rd International Conference on Islamic Heritage Architecture and Art**

9–11 June 2020 (Held online due to the pandemic).

The conference was organised by the Wessex Institute, UK, represented by Professor Juan Casares, and the University of Seville, Spain, represented by Professor Samuel Dominguez Amarillo. The conference, which started in Valencia, Spain in 2016 addresses a variety of topics connected with the design of many types of buildings in Islamic countries, including not only the better-known public buildings like mosques, mausolea, citadels and forts, but also houses and gardens, engineering works such as bridges and dams, irrigation systems and others which have had a profound impact on society.

There were a series of invited lectures on advanced topics of research and applications, as follows:

“Re-using heritage elements in new buildings - cases from United Arab Emirates (UAE)”, by Prof. Jihad Awad, Ajman University, United Arab Emirates.

“Past, present and future perspectives of glass ceiling applications in historic buildings: cases from Ankara, Turkey” by Dr Gulsen Disli, Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey.

“The impact of urbanisation on cultural identity and townscape characteristics of Kuala Lumpur china town, Malaysia” by Dr Shahrul Said, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia.

“Sustaining cultural identity through Arabic calligraphy: A critical reading of Nasser al-Salem’s artworks” by Dr Lina Kattan, University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The papers presented at the conference covered the following topics: Contemporary forms of Islamic arts; Conservation and restoration; Cross-cultural encounters; Historical aspects; Heritage studies; Mosques and minarets; Palaces; The use of light and orientation.

#### Conference Publication

Papers presented at this conference are published in Vol. 197 of the WIT Transactions on Built Environment (ISSN 1743-3509). Papers presented at the meeting are also available Open Access in the eLibrary of the Wessex Institute (<https://www.witpress.com/elibrary>) from where they can be freely downloaded by any interested parties.

### **Iron Age Metallurgy in Arabia**

Lloyd Weeks, University of New England, Australia

A virtual ‘work-in-progress’ meeting on Iron Age metallurgy in Arabia was held across three sessions, from July 27 to July 29, 2020, allowing researchers to share the results of their ongoing work. The overall goal was to draw on the collected expertise of participants to support friendly, informal, and constructive debates around subjects of shared interest.

Sessions included formal presentations with time for questions, as well as extended, open-ended discussions of broader issues. Formal presentations focused on the evidence for Iron Age copper smelting at the sites of Saruq al-Hadid, Dubai (Kristina Franke and Lloyd Weeks) and Raki, Oman (Joseph Lehner, Barbara Helwing and Mike Harrower), including remote-sensing approaches (Ioanna Dumitru). Ongoing work on related support industries, including wood extraction and charcoal production, was also presented (Amir Zaribaf). Evidence for metallurgical activities at the contemporary site of ‘Uqdat al-Bakrah, Oman, was presented and discussed (Claudio Giardino), alongside insights from use-wear studies of copper-alloy artefacts from the site (Omer Can Aksoy). Separate papers presented typological and compositional studies of the Iron Age copper hoard found at Al-Khoud, Oman (Paul Yule, Nasser al-

Jahwari, Khaled Douglas, Claudio Giardino and Bernhard Pracejus.) and the evidence for integrated copper production and distribution in the Iron Age settlement system of the Rustaq region in Oman (Derek Kennet). Beyond copper, presenters discussed iron use and exchange in the early Iron Age (Ivan Stepanov) and gold production and use at Saruq al-Hadid (separate papers by Alicia Perea and Nicolau Escanilla and Kristina Franke).

The workshop was attended by just under 50 participants over the three sessions, who Zoomed in from North America, the UK, Europe, the Middle East, Arabia and Australia. All speakers and attendees are warmly thanked for their contribution to lively discussion and debate, not to mention their willingness to get up early or stay up late! The discussion made abundantly clear that there are many issues of technological detail, of change and innovation, and of local and long-distance connections that remain to be further explored to improve our understanding of early Iron Age metallurgy and society in Arabia. The need for further research, collaboration and discussion was obvious, particularly in relation to integrating the evidence from southeastern Arabia with ongoing studies of material from other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Also apparent were the upsides and downsides of running an entirely online live workshop – in that sense, it was a very 2020 kind of experience!

### **The Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia (OSME) Summer Meeting:**

OSME online meetings – some reflections by Chairman Rob Sheldon

For more than 50 years, the Ornithological Society of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia (OSME) has relied on face-to-face meetings to develop, manage and promote our work. Engagement with our members and supporters has centred around a Summer Meeting that incorporates our Annual General Meeting, usually in July, and having an exhibition stand at the annual UK Birdfair, the birdwatchers Glastonbury!



**Plate 1. The OSME stand at the 2019 Birdfair – approximately 120 members, and many more non-members, will visit the stand at a typical Birdfair**

In recent years OSME Council have been discussing how we can broaden our engagement with the significant proportion of members and supporters who live outside the UK, and particularly those based in the OSME region. It is fair to say that our approach up until 2020 had been rather tentative, focussing on expanding social media, but still cautious of exploring new ways of ‘meeting’ our members. All that changed in March 2020.

One real positive outcome of the travel restrictions put in place to combat the global pandemic has been the ‘forced’ adoption of video-conferencing facilities to hold various OSME meetings. Our regular Council meetings where trustees usually physically gather to discuss our work have all been held using Zoom. During 2020 we held three official Council meetings, and also had several shorter meetings specifically for planning certain projects. These have been just as efficient and effective as the usual physical get-togethers, and it is likely that this approach will become the norm even once travel restrictions have eased. Indeed, we are already starting to adapt, holding our 150th Council meeting over an evening which saves trustees having to give up part of their precious weekends. As well as significant savings in terms of time, there are obvious benefits in reduced travel costs and the associated carbon emissions. It also means we can now start to explore inviting members from across the region to join OSME Council and help with the running of our charity.



**Plate 2. Holding Council meetings online has many benefits, although it is difficult to share a celebratory cake!**

Our annual Summer Meeting in Thetford, England is always a great occasion, where members and friends gather to enjoy talks about the region and catch up over dinner. The in-person event usually attracts a crowd of about 50-60 faithful OSME members, who attend the AGM and listen to a series of 4 or 5 speakers. For the first time in our history, the event was cancelled in 2020, and with no possibility of it being held even later in the year, we made the decision to hold the Summer Meeting online. As these were our first tentative steps we decided to focus on delivering a programme of speakers and delayed holding the AGM until the end of the year. From June through to early August, OSME Council regularly gathered via Zoom to co-ordinate the delivery of our first online Summer Meeting. With a huge sigh of relief the meeting was a great success enabling OSME members

from around the world to 'attend' and listen to speakers from across the region. More than 140 people attended (from 190 registrations) from 19 OSME countries (42 countries in total) to listen to four speakers, three of whom were based in the region – it was a truly OSME-wide event! The technology was overseen by OSME Council member, Nick Moran, who has a vast amount of experience using Zoom as part of his day job at the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The comments from attendees about how professionally the event was run was a testament to Nick's expertise, as well as the significant amount of time Council spent preparing and planning the meeting.

Some selected feedback we received during and after the meeting include the following:

"First time in a meeting although member since 1994; thanks OSME!"

"Agreed regarding the value of the virtual meeting; For various reasons (mostly being overseas) this is the first time I have been able to attend in my 15 years + of OSME membership..."

"Congratulations to all concerned – very well organised.... I wish the meetings I attend for work were like this"

There is a comprehensive [review](#) of the Summer Meeting on the OSME website.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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### **Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa**

Exhibition at The British Museum 11 Feb 2021 - 15 Aug 2021

Featuring around 100 works on paper – from etchings to photographs and artists' books – the majority of works in the exhibition have been collected by The British Museum in the past decade. They highlight topics of gender, identity, history and politics, while also exploring poetic traditions and the intersections between past and present. There is no single narrative but a multiplicity of stories.

With drawings by artists trained everywhere from Paris to Jerusalem, and subject matters ranging from the Syrian uprisings to the burning of the National Library of Baghdad, it offers new views of societies whose challenges are well-known in the press but are little known through the prism of contemporary art.

### **Seminar for Arabian Studies**

The 2021 conference, the 54th Seminar for Arabian Studies, will take place on-line over the weekends of 2 – 4 and 9 – 11 July 2021 with the Casa Arabe, Cordoba, Spain, as virtual host. Although we are not able to convene the Seminar physically in Spain we hope to explore the

cultural links that connect the Iberian and Arabian peninsulas in two special sessions. Further details to be announced.

The Seminar for Arabian Studies is the only international forum that meets annually for the presentation of the latest academic research in the humanities on the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest times to the present day or, in the case of political and social history, to the end of the Ottoman Empire (1922). The Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies are published the following year in time for the next Seminar.

<https://www.theiasa.com/seminar/>

### **BRISMES 2021: Knowledge, Power and Middle Eastern Studies 5-9 July 2021, Online.**

The University of Kent School of Politics and International Relations will be hosting the 2021 Annual BRISMES Conference on the theme of Knowledge, Power and Middle Eastern Studies.

The BRISMES conference is the largest and most prestigious annual UK gathering of scholars and practitioners focussed on the region. At the event, BRISMES invites researchers from all disciplines to explore that year's theme – or to present any aspect of their Middle East Studies research.

The keynote speakers for the 2021 conference are Professor Pinar Bilgin (Bilkent University), Professor Caroline Rooney (University of Kent), and Dr Amina Wadud.

The conference schedule will be published on the BRISMES website once the delegate registration deadline has closed at the end of March. For registration and payment queries, please contact Louisa Harvey at [eventregistrations@kent.ac.uk](mailto:eventregistrations@kent.ac.uk). More information: <http://www.brismes.ac.uk/conference/>

### **ASTENE Online Summer Conference (2021) 24-25th July 2021 (via Zoom)**

Call for Papers

Following the postponement of the 14th biennial ASTENE Conference to July 2022 ASTENE invites proposals for contributions to a smaller virtual conference. Topics to be considered (but not limited to):

- Accounts of travellers to Egypt, the Near East, Iran, North Africa and the historical territories of the Ottoman Empire
- Accounts of travellers from the Middle East to other regions such as Europe, South and East Asia
- Travel writing, including fiction, memoirs, diaries, guidebooks and journalism
- The visual culture of travelling, including painting,

sculpture, drawing, photography and other artistic ephemera  
- Critical, feminist and post-colonial approaches to Egyptology and Near/Middle Eastern travel studies  
- Histories of mobility, migration and diasporas of religious communities and other groups  
- Digital and other new media projects for understanding the history of travel

Proposals may be submitted either for individual presentations of 20 minutes or for panels of 3-4 speakers of

20 minutes each.

Please include a biography of no more than 200 words, presentation title and a 300-word abstract. Proposals should be submitted to [conference.astene@gmail.com](mailto:conference.astene@gmail.com) by 30 April 2021.

This event will be free, but contributors will be expected to join ASTENE if not already members and prior registration will be required; further details will be available in due course.

## JOURNALS & MAGAZINES

### **Adumatu**

<http://www.alsudairy.org.sa/en/publishing-programme/journals/adumatu/>

Adumatu is a semi-annual archaeological journal that sheds the light on the archaeological studies of the Arab World. This magazine relies on an academic body of professors in the field of archaeology working in the universities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who oversee the publication of the magazine.

### **Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy**

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/16000471/2020/31/2>

This journal serves as a forum for study in archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, and the early history of countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Editors: Bruno Overlaet and Peter Stein

### **Aram**

[https://poj.peeters-leuven.be/content.php?url=journal&journal\\_code=ARAM](https://poj.peeters-leuven.be/content.php?url=journal&journal_code=ARAM)

ARAM Periodical is a refereed journal, published by the ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies. The journal publishes the contributions to the International Conferences which take place yearly together with the ARAM Newsletter.

### **AramcoWorld**

<https://www.aramcoworld.com/Home>

A bi-monthly magazine published by Aramco Services Company, which distributes its magazine, Saudi Aramco World, to increase cross-cultural understanding and to broaden knowledge of the cultures, history and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. Two-year (12-issue) renewable subscriptions to the print edition of AramcoWorld are available without charge to a limited number of readers worldwide.

### **Atlat: Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology**

ISSN 1319-8351. Ministry of Education for Antiquities and Museums, PO Box 3734, Riyadh 11481.

### **Banipal: Magazine of Modern Arabic Literature**

[https://www.banipal.co.uk/current\\_issue/](https://www.banipal.co.uk/current_issue/)

A magazine of modern Arabic Literature.

### **Bulletin of the International Association for the Study of Arabia**

<https://www.theiasa.com/publications/bulletin/>

Past issues of our Bulletin can be found online.

### **Fauna of Arabia**

[www.libri.ch/App\\_Web/EN/services/faunaofarabia.aspx](http://www.libri.ch/App_Web/EN/services/faunaofarabia.aspx)

A continuous series on the terrestrial, limnetic and marine zoology of the Arabian Peninsula. It began as Fauna of Saudi Arabia but changed its name and remit in 1998

### **HAWWA Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World**

<https://brill.com/view/journals/haww/haww-overview.xml>

Hawwa publishes articles from all disciplinary and comparative perspectives that concern women and gender issues in the Middle East and the Islamic world. These include Muslim and non-Muslim communities within the greater Middle East, and Muslim and Middle Eastern communities elsewhere in the world.

### **Index Islamicus**

<https://bibliographies.brillonline.com/browse/index-islamicus>

An international classified bibliography of publications in European languages on all aspects of Islam and the Muslim world. The Index Islamicus Online provides the reader with an effective overview of what has been published on a given subject in the field of Islamic Studies in its broadest sense.

### **International Journal of Middle East Studies**

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies#>

IJMES focuses on the area encompassing the Middle East and adjacent geo-cultural regions from the seventh century to the present.

### **Journal of Arabian Studies; Arabia, the Gulf and the Red Sea**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjab20/current>

Journal of Arabian Studies is the only journal focusing on the Arabian Peninsula, its surrounding waters, and their connections with the Western Indian Ocean (from West India

to East Africa), from Antiquity to the present day. It covers a wide range of topics, in all disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities.

#### **Journal of the British-Yemeni Society**

<http://b-ys.org.uk/journal/about-journal>

The Journal of the British–Yemeni Society is published annually and distributed to the members of the B-YS. It contains articles by academics, researchers, and experts on a wide range of Yemeni topics including history, politics, ethnography, culture, and ecology.

#### **Journal of Near Eastern Studies**

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/jnes/current>

Published by the University of Chicago Press, covering research on the ancient and medieval civilisations of the Near East, including their archaeology, art, history, literature, linguistics, religion, law, and science.

#### **Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient**

<https://brill.com/view/journals/jesh/jesh-overview.xml>

The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient (JESHO) publishes original research articles in Asian, Near, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Studies across history. The journal promotes world history from Asian and Middle Eastern perspectives and it challenges scholars to integrate cultural and intellectual history with economic, social and political analysis.

#### **Journal of Oman Studies**

A scholarly journal that publishes original and refereed research in both Arabic and English in areas relating to natural and cultural heritage relevant to the Sultanate of Oman. Published by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Sultanate of Oman.

Email: [jos@mhc.gov.om](mailto:jos@mhc.gov.om) or [editor\\_chief@mhc.gov.om](mailto:editor_chief@mhc.gov.om)

#### **Journal of Persianate Studies**

<https://brill.com/view/journals/jps/jps-overview.xml>

The Journal of Persianate Studies is a peer-reviewed publication of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. The journal publishes articles on the culture and civilization of the geographical area where Persian has historically been the dominant language or a major cultural force.

#### **Levant**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ylev20>

Levant is an international peer-reviewed journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL), a British Academy-sponsored institute with research centres in Amman and Jerusalem, and which also supports research in Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus. Levant welcomes papers dealing with the past of the Middle East (Palaeolithic–Ottoman) from a range of disciplinary perspectives including anthropology, archaeology, history and heritage studies.

#### **Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.**

<https://brill.com/view/journals/mjcc/mjcc-overview.xml>

The Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication (MEJCC) provides a critical academic sphere that engages scholars of the Middle East and North Africa in a dialogue about culture, communication and politics.

#### **Paléorient**

<https://www.mshmondes.cnrs.fr/paleorient>

An international multidisciplinary journal dedicated to the prehistory and protohistory of southwestern and central Asia. Its aim is to promote discussions between prehistorians, archaeologists and anthropologists whose field of research goes from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indus, from central Asia to the Persian Gulf, as well as specialists of various disciplines related to the evolution of Man in his natural environment from the Palaeolithic period to the Early Bronze Age.

#### **Sandgrouse**

<https://osme.org/sandgrouse/>

Sandgrouse is published by the Ornithological Society of the Middle East the Caucuses and Central Asia and contains papers and short notes on the ornithology of the region, provides bird and conservation news from the region and a comprehensive round up of bird sightings in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

#### **Sekka Magazine**

<https://sekkamag.com/>

Sekka is the first online magazine and publication to be managed by Khaleejis and narrated primarily by the people of the Arabian Gulf Region. Established in 2017, and headquartered in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, Sekka is an online magazine that is dedicated to documenting the stories of the Arabian Gulf Region and the experiences of its people, and sharing them with the world.

#### **Syria**

<https://www.ifporient.org/publications/syria/>

Syria, subtitled Archéologie, art et histoire (until 2005 Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie), is a multidisciplinary and multilingual academic journal covering the Semitic Middle East from prehistory to the Islamic conquest.

#### **Tribulus, Journal of the Emirates Natural History Group**

<http://enhg.org/Home/Publications/Tribulus.aspx>

Volumes 1 through 15 are now scanned in to PDF format and available on the ENHG website.

## FEATURED ORGANISATIONS

*Last year we partnered with KFCRIS for a successful event on recent discoveries in Saudi Arabia.*

### **King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)**

The KFCRIS is an independent non-governmental institution based in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Center was founded in 1403/1983 by the King Faisal Foundation (KFF) to preserve the legacy of the late King Faisal and to continue his mission of transmitting knowledge between the Kingdom and the world. The Center serves as a platform for research and Islamic Studies, bringing together researchers and research institutions from the Kingdom and across the world through conferences, workshops, and lectures, and through the production and publication of scholarly works, as well as the preservation of Islamic manuscripts. The Center's Research Department comprises specialized research units and experienced researchers who endeavor to produce in-depth analyses in various fields, including Socioeconomics, Cultural Studies, African and Asian Studies. The Center also hosts the Library, which preserves invaluable Islamic manuscripts, the Al-Faisal Museum for Arab Islamic Art, the Al-Faisal Institute for Human Resources Development, the Darat Al-Faisal, and the Al-Faisal Cultural Press, which issues the Al-Faisal magazine and other key intellectual periodicals.

For more information, please contact [pr@kfcris.com](mailto:pr@kfcris.com)

*The Emirates Society is new to us, so we are pleased to include more details of their activities.*

### **The Emirates Society – growing stronger friendship**

In 2018 the UAE Embassy in London established a friendship group with strong aims to grow and strengthen the UK-UAE relationship.

Chaired by the UK's former Minister for the Middle East, Rt Hon Alistair Burt, the Society organises talks and events designed to increase the understanding of the UAE and its society and culture, and to grow friendships and relationships between our two countries.

The mailing list has individuals from Government, civil society, diplomacy, business, journalism and academia, all who have a shared interest in the relationship between the UK and the UAE.

We have held some excellent events in London including discussing UK-UAE relations post-Brexit, with HE Dr Anwar Gargash, the planet in the post-Covid world, featuring HH Sheikha Shamma bint Sultan, Lord Goldsmith and Dominic Jermy OBE, the UAE's response to Covid19, with Orlando Agrippa, George Kapitelli and Sir James Mackey and a discussion with HE Omar Ghobash, the UAE's

Assistant Minister for Culture and Public Diplomacy. Plus a screening of the History of the Emirates, a series of short films documenting the foundation and growth of the UAE. The Society also hosted a National Day event with HE Mansoor Abulhoul and other distinguished guests from around the Diplomatic community in London, celebrating the UAE together.

Events this year have, like everywhere else, been online with webinars being the order of the day. Previously we have held some excellent events with visiting Ministers and dignitaries from the UAE, but for now we must content ourselves with our virtual world.

The most recent events were a very popular discussion on the history of defence in the Gulf, with Dr David Roberts and Sir Simon Mayall, and an exceptional update from the Hope Mars Mission team just days before the hugely successful arrival of the probe into the orbit of Mars. HE Sarah Al Amiri, Mission director Omran Sharaf, and Sir Ian Blatchford from the UK Science Museum gave the Society an astonishing tour de force update of the Mission, to an audience of our regular members, Parliamentarians and journalists from around the world.



**Mars Mission Update 1.2.21: HE Sarah Al Amiri / Omran Sharaf / Sir Ian Blatchford / Rt Hon Alistair Burt**

We were also extremely privileged to host HE Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, and HE Reem al Hashimy, Minister for International Cooperation, to discuss the Abrahamic Accords, and their impact on politics and religion in the Middle East and beyond. A very special event.

Coming up in the near future will be a Webinar on why we must ensure the pandemic does not take our eye off extremism, and a more cultural event looking at the upcoming Expo.

Chairman of the Society Rt Hon Alistair Burt says: "What the meetings of the Society have already demonstrated is that it is possible, and indeed necessary, to build upon a base of memory and affection for the Emirates from those who have worked and lived there, to an excitement and interest for the contemporary Emirates and what is to come. I want the

Society to demonstrate within its membership and range of events that the relationship between the UK and the UAE is a vibrant and living one, comprising a range of sectors well beyond what might strike people at first glance. After the Hope Mission, the sky is surely the limit!”

The Emirates Society goes from strength to strength in building this important relationship, and we are always open to new attendees joining our mailing list. Contact via [admin@emiratessociety.org](mailto:admin@emiratessociety.org)

Do view our previous webinars on our [YouTube channel](#).

*Whenever we share ENHG posts on our social media they are very popular. ENHG does an excellent job raising awareness of environmental issues in the UAE. A huge thank you to the Group for sharing these amazing photographs with us.*

### The Emirates Natural History Group

The Emirates Natural History Group was founded 1976, and is the oldest non-governmental Institution dealing with environmental topics in the UAE. The Abu Dhabi chapter was the first to be formed and remains the “Mother group,” while other groups are in Dubai, Al Ain, Fujairah and Ras al Khaimah. All of the chapters cooperate and communicate with each other, and every Emirate hosts the others on a rotating yearly basis.



**Acanthodactylus schmidti** Schmidt's fringe toed lizard by (c) Claudia Steuber

Everyone who wants to connect with nature in the UAE sooner or later finds his or her way to us. We are a community of volunteers with diverse backgrounds, and are in contact with resident nature scientists that we invite regularly to give talks.

Furthermore, we try to invite experts working in protected areas in and outside the country to present their conservation efforts, especially around endangered species. This season (2020/21), an expert from Limbe Wildlife Center gave us a talk about endangered Drill monkeys in Cameroon, while we expect another talk on the ecology of the world’s largest remaining population of endangered Indian Ocean humpback dolphins in early summer this year.

As nature protection is not possible anymore without thinking about global sustainability, waste reduction, and climate change, these topics have become part of our talks and field trips. Many of our members collect plastic waste

around the coast, and some even help birds injured by discarded fishing gear.



**Bird watching with Oscar Campell** (c) Claudia Steuber

Recent climate change research in the polar regions, as well as adaptations of native species to the hyperarid conditions of the Emirates is continuously well presented by researchers from New York University Abu Dhabi.

Paleodeserts and environmental and climate changes since the Miocene, as well as human evolution in the region are also amongst the topics of talks covered by archaeologists and other invited guest speakers.



**Carmine darter-Male-(Crocotthemis erythaeae)** (c) Claudia Steuber

Regular fieldtrips guided by our members, often led by specialists, take groups of around 25 people. We visit nature reserves where we have a look at geology, flora and fauna, as well as historical or archaeological sites. Birdwatching trips in Abu Dhabi or Dubai are very popular, as are trips to organic farms and organized beach clean-ups.



**Desert Hyacinth (Cistance tubulosa)** (c) Claudia Steuber

It's our aim to learn and explore together and help to protect nature whenever and wherever we can. We help to educate the younger generation by giving them a glimpse of natural ecosystems, and have some future birdwatchers already on their way. We try raise awareness and help to motivate people of all ages to become fascinated observers of nature, protecting it instead of destroying it, for example saving native insects from unnecessary use of pesticides. We try to support animal welfare by motivating people to help animals in need.



Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) (c) Claudia Steuber



Salt crusts photographed by Claudia Steuber (Photo\_Birgit Müller)

We also have two different publications for members only: the printed *Tribulus* magazine, free for members once a year, and our online Newsletter that contains lecture reviews, articles by our members, and sometimes book reviews or other topics touching on the local environment.

We are in the process of improving our internet platforms, and our Facebook page is also active. Join the page to get a sense of what the community is all about.

Please contact us if you wish to become a member via [enhgauh@mail.tidyhq.com](mailto:enhgauh@mail.tidyhq.com)  
Claudia Steuber  
Jane Meikle

The website for the Emirates Natural History Group is here:

<http://enhg.org/>

The Facebook page is here: <https://www.facebook.com/ENHGAD>

Follow them on Twitter @enhgad



Green Bee-eater (*Merops Orientalis*) (c) Claudia Steuber

## SOCIETIES, ASSOCIATIONS & OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH)

<https://tcaabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx>

Aga Kahn Documentation Center

<https://libraries.mit.edu/akdc/>

Aga Khan Trust for Culture

<http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture>

American Institute for Yemeni Studies

[www.aiys.org](http://www.aiys.org)

The Anglo-Jordanian Society

<http://a-j-s.org.uk/>

The Anglo-Omani Society

<http://www.angloomanisociety.com/>

Arab-British Centre

<https://www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/>

Arab World Institute

[www.imarabe.org/](http://www.imarabe.org/)

The Atassi Foundation

<http://www.atassifoundation.com/>

International Council for Archaeozoology

<https://alexandriaarchive.org/icaz/workaswa>

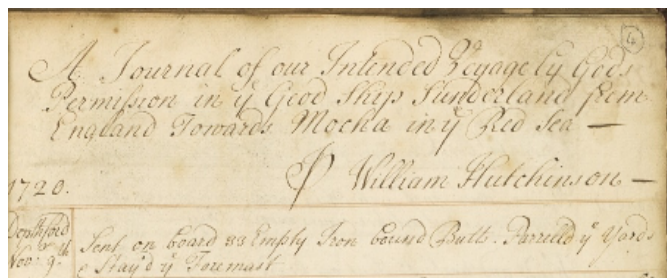
- ArchNet**  
<https://archnet.org/>
- Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East**  
[www.astene.org.uk](http://www.astene.org.uk)
- Barjeel Art Foundation**  
<https://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/>
- British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology**  
<http://banealcane.org/banea/>
- British Council**  
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/>
- British Institute of Persian Studies**  
[www.bips.ac.uk](http://www.bips.ac.uk)
- British Institute for the Study of Iraq**  
[www.bisi.ac.uk/](http://www.bisi.ac.uk/)
- British Society for Middle Eastern Studies**  
[www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk)
- British-Yemeni Society**  
<http://b-ys.org.uk/>
- Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World**  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/research/research-centres/casaw>
- Centre Français de Recherche de la Péninsule Arabique (CEFRAPA)**  
<https://cefascnrs.fr/?lang=fr>
- Council for British Research in the Levant**  
[www.cbrl.org.uk](http://www.cbrl.org.uk)
- Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient Department**  
<https://www.dainst.org/standort/-/organization-display/ZI9STUj61zKB/14586>
- French Institute of the Near-East (Ifpo)**  
[www.ifporient.org/](http://www.ifporient.org/)
- Friends of the Hadhramaut**  
[www.hadhramaut.co.uk](http://www.hadhramaut.co.uk)
- Friends of Soqatra**  
[www.friendsofsoqatra.org](http://www.friendsofsoqatra.org)
- Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation**  
<https://www.al-furqan.com/>
- Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University**  
[www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais](http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais)
- Iran Heritage Foundation**  
<https://www.iranheritage.org/>
- The Islamic Manuscript Association**  
<http://www.islamicmanuscript.org/home.aspx>
- London Centre for the Ancient Near East**  
<http://banealcane.org/>
- Louvre Abu Dhabi**  
<https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae/>
- Middle East Medievalists**  
<https://www.middleeastmedievalists.com/>
- Mathaf Gallery**  
[www.mathafgallery.com](http://www.mathafgallery.com)
- MBI Al Jaber Foundation**  
[www.mbfoundation.com](http://www.mbfoundation.com)
- Museum of Islamic Art (Qatar)**  
<http://www.mia.org.qa/en/>
- The Natural History of Oman and Arabia**  
[www.oman.org/nath00.htm](http://www.oman.org/nath00.htm)
- Ornithological Society of the Middle East**  
[www.osme.org](http://www.osme.org)
- Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia**  
<http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/>
- Palestine Exploration Fund**  
[www.pef.org.uk](http://www.pef.org.uk)
- The Palestinian Museum**  
<https://www.palmuseum.org/language/english>
- Palaeodeserts**  
<http://www.palaeodeserts.com/>
- Qatar Digital Library**  
[www.qdl.qa](http://www.qdl.qa)
- Royal Asiatic Society**  
[www.royalasiaticsociety.org/](http://www.royalasiaticsociety.org/)
- Saudi-British Society**  
[www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk](http://www.saudibritishsociety.org.uk)
- SOAS Middle East Institute**  
<https://www.soas.ac.uk/smei/>
- Soudavar Memorial Foundation**  
<http://soudavar.org/>
- The Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA)**  
<http://timea.rice.edu/>
- University of Michigan Global Islamic Studies Center**  
<https://ii.umich.edu/content/ii-directory/islamicstudies/en.html>
- The Qantara Project**  
<http://www.qantara-med.org>
- The Yemen Manuscript Digitization Initiative**  
<http://ymdi.uoregon.edu/>

# THE LAST WORD

*The Last Word in this Edition of the IASA Bulletin goes to the British Library/ Qatar Foundation Partnership. Please click on the blue hyperlinks in the article to read more.*

## News from the British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership

In November 1720 Captain William Hutchinson, Commander of the East India Company ship *Sunderland*, wrote the first entry in his journal of a return voyage to Mocha, Yemen.



[IOR/L/MAR/B/675, f 4](#)

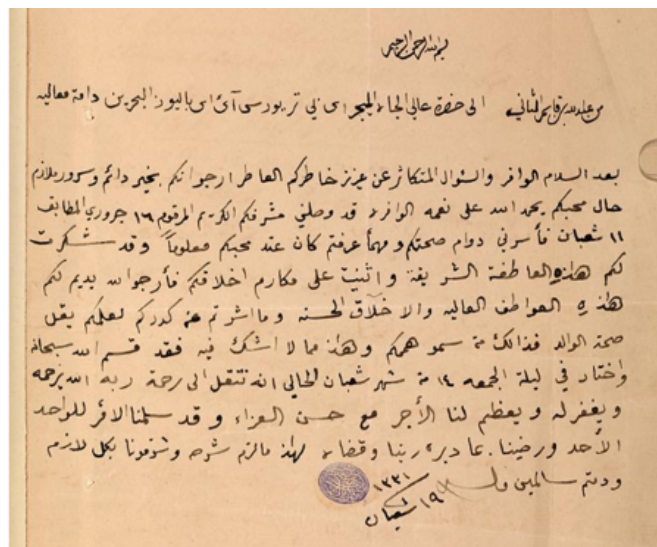
Following its digitisation of the *Sunderland's* log-book the British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership (BLQFP) is [following that journey as it progressed](#).

The digitisation of the [IOR/L/MAR](#) ship log books, including that of the *Sunderland*, is just one of the recent exciting developments taking place in the [British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership programme](#). Since its inception in 2012 the British Library/Qatar Foundation Partnership and the Qatar National Library (QNL) have worked in partnership to develop the [Qatar Digital Library](#), launched in 2014 which provides digital access to a hugely significant collection of archives and manuscripts relating to the Gulf region and wider Arabic-speaking world. Dr Talal al-Rashoud, Kuwait University, comments that it has 'the potential to revolutionize the study of the Gulf region'. The BLQFP is committed to contextualizing and understanding the India Office Records relating to the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula as a British colonial and imperial archive.

Key features include:

- a bilingual resource in [English](#) and [Arabic](#)
- over [130 contextual articles written by experts to bring the collection to life](#)
- enhanced cataloguing for over 7000 files
- [improved search tools](#), including optical character recognition of typed text
- everything available for free for everyone.

From the early days of the project new insights were shed on [Qatari history](#) and [British involvement in the Gulf](#).



Letter in Arabic from Sheikh 'Abdullah bin Jāsīm Āl Thānī informing the Political Agent at Bahrain of his father's death, dated 19 Sha'bān 1331 [24 July 1913]. IOR/R/15/2/26, f 155

## [‘A considerable fortune: the wealth, and death, of Sheikh Jasim bin Muhammad Al Thani’](#)

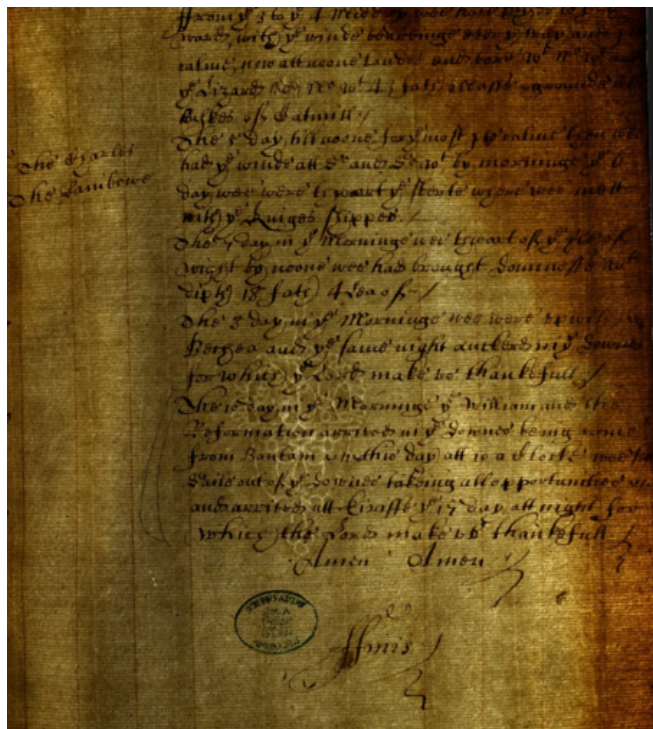
As this Bulletin goes to press the BLQFP is approaching the milestone of its 2 millionth image digitised since inception of the partnership in 2012 with over 1 million users accessing the collection for free online to date.

The content selected for the QDL is varied. The core is taken from the British Library's India Office Records spanning the period from the start of the 17th century to the mid-20th century but there are also a range of [Arabic Scientific Manuscripts](#) including a [manual on the principles of navigational theory](#) and [innovations in music notation](#).

The India Office Records files that have been digitised under Phase 3 (2019-2021) of the Partnership include the [IOR/L/MAR Marine Department Records, 1600- c.1879](#) and the [IOR/G East India Company Factory Records](#) following on from earlier files such as the [Departmental Papers: Political and Secret Separate \(or Subject\) Files \(IOR/L/PS/10\)](#) and [IOR/R/15/1 Political Residency, Bushire](#).

Recent highlights have included British Library blog articles on the [‘...the General Maritime Treaty of 1820 and British imperialism in the Persian Gulf’](#) and [‘The Gombroon Diaries: a Rich Source on Eighteenth Century Persia and the Persian Gulf’](#). Further unknown footnotes to history such as [‘The curious case of Jean Robbio’](#) during the Napoleonic Wars have been examined, and the [mystery of the Roebuck](#) unravelled - a ship seemingly in two places at the same time - following detailed archival investigation. By using backlighting the BLQFP has literally shone light on the [early watermark designs](#) found in the ship logs to understand and appreciate them more fully. Many [maps of the Gulf and Arabia](#) and connecting trade links of the region are available

as well as photographs such as these by [‘the first Meccan photographer’](#).



**Watermark in ship log revealed**

Early 20th century archival material is also available on the QDL such as Wilfrid [Malleson's 'Diary of a Tour in the Persian Gulf and in Turkish Arabia'](#) (1906) including this map and [photographs](#) of Basra below.



**'DIARY OF A TOUR IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND IN TURKISH ARABIA, DECEMBER, 1906 (WITH MAP)'**

[IOR/L/PS/20/C260](#)

The QDL also includes recordings of the [Arabic music](#) relating to the Gulf, available on the [QDL's channel on Soundcloud](#) and the BLQFP has fostered [innovative research](#) on the music of the Gulf, Arabian Peninsula and wider Middle East and the preservation of [Arab audiovisual heritage](#).

All the catalogue descriptions and articles on the QDL are bilingual and a link is provided at the top of every page to switch between English and Arabic.



We look forward to keeping in touch with the IASA – follow the BLQFP on [@blqatar](#) and the QNL on [@QNLlib](#)

*Thank you to our members for your contined support over the past year, and to all of the contributors to this edition of the IASA Bulletin.*